

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Small farmers in Cuba
hold national congress

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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Korea talks show mass support for reunification

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

For three days in mid-June, the heads of state of north and south Korea met for the first official talks at this level since the peninsula was carved in two at the end of the Korean War 47 years ago. Kim Jong Il, president of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), hosted the talks in the capital city of Pyongyang. An agreement signed June 15 calls for closer economic cooperation and eventual reunification, and opens the way for family reunions later in the year.

The agreement also includes clauses on the repatriation of prisoners of war from the north, still held in Seoul's jails, proposals for joint economic projects, and a pledge not to engage in offensive military operations against each other. Government officials are supposed to meet to flesh out the agreement's details.

Four days after the talks ended U.S. president William Clinton announced the easing of a near-total trade embargo against north Korea imposed in 1950. The measure "rewarded" Pyongyang's moratorium on missile testing, implemented nine months earlier. U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright plans to follow up the summit with a visit to Beijing and Seoul. The Clinton government, slandering north Korea as a "rogue nation," is using different avenues

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U.S. Navy to resume Vieques bombing

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

"We are calling on people to protest against the U.S. Navy's decision to resume their bombing of Vieques with 130,000 pounds of shells," said Robert Rabin, a leader of the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques, in a June 21 telephone interview from that Puerto Rican island. The Navy announced its intention to start dropping bombs there the last week of June.

Rabin reported that a demonstration in Vieques was called for June 22 in front of the U.S. Navy's Camp García. Protests were also called for that day in New York's Times Square and in other U.S. cities.

U.S. military officials announced that five warships from the *USS George Washington* battle group were steaming toward Vieques to conduct military maneuvers off its coast. They will fire as many as 600 shells from ships and 830 bombs from planes, including 500- and 1,000-pound "inert" bombs, onto the Navy's bombing range, despite the protests by local residents and others in Puerto Rico, a U.S. colony.

The Pentagon has carried out such military training on Vieques since the early 1940s, when farmers and fishermen were evicted from their lands to make way for the U.S. military, which now occupies three-

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St. Paul meat packers to vote on union in July

Union supporters produce newsletter, fight victimizations

BY TOM FISHER

ST. PAUL, Minnesota—Meat packers at Dakota Premium Foods here have been notified that a July 21 date has been set for a union representation election. The National Labor Relations Board has informed United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 789 that the election will be held in the company cafeteria that day. More than two-thirds of the workers in the plant have signed cards indicating they want a union in the plant, where cows are slaughtered.

Dakota workers staged a seven-hour sit-down strike June 1 to demand that the line speed be decreased and that workers not be forced to work while injured. The company had steadily increased the number of cows being slaughtered during the previous six months.

The strike gave rapid momentum to the effort to bring the union back to this plant of 175 workers, as the company was forced to grant concessions on line speed. At the same time, the company threatened to eliminate medical benefits for the workers if the union-organizing effort was successful, as the bosses stepped up an in-plant propaganda campaign designed to intimidate the workers.

The union was decertified in this plant in 1992 after it failed to win a contract from the company. It had been voted in as the bargaining representative for the workers a year earlier.

The union-organizing drive is being strengthened by workers' actions to defend



Militant/Jake Perasso

June 12 march and rally in St. Paul, Minnesota, by meat packers at Dakota Premium Foods. The workers are fighting against brutal speedup and for a union.

themselves against company attacks. On June 15 a supervisor fired Mauro Medina, a worker on the boning line, after Medina requested help to carry out a job he had not been trained for. The next morning three of his co-workers from the boning department

approached management and demanded that he be returned to work. Management backed down and Medina was allowed to return to his job.

Another worker in the boning department,

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Despite protests, Texas gov't readies execution

BY LEA SHERMAN

HOUSTON—As the *Militant* was going to press June 22, the government of Texas was moving to execute Gary Graham, amid protests by supporters who have been cam-

paigned to stop the state-sanctioned murder and win his release.

The case of Graham, whose name is now Shaka Sankofa, has become a national focal point for the fight to abolish the death

penalty. To many working people here and around the country, it has graphically illustrated the anti-working-class and racist nature of the death penalty. The debate has been heightened by continuing revelations in the media about the number of people on death row who have been falsely convicted.

Graham, who is Black, was 17 at the time he was convicted of the May 1981 killing of Bobby Lambert and sentenced to death. There was no physical evidence linking him to the killing. There were eyewitnesses who said he was not the gunman, and alibi witnesses placed him far from the Safeway supermarket where the killing took place. Only one witness testified that Graham was the killer.

The U.S. Supreme Court on May 1 refused to hear Graham's appeal for a new trial, and within days the June 22 execution date was scheduled, the sixth date set in his almost 20 years on death row.

Graham's attorneys, Jack Zimmerman and Richard Burr, filed a petition to the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles asking for a full or conditional pardon, a 120-day reprieve to have a hearing, or a commutation of his death sentence. The board was to make a decision on June 21 and then refer it to Gov. George Bush, the Republican presidential candidate, who has the power to unilaterally grant a 30-day reprieve.

The defense attorneys cited evidence that Graham did not have adequate representation at his trial. They have videotapes of two eyewitnesses, Sherian Etuk and Ronald Hubbard, workers at the Safeway store, who

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You are invited to
the launching of the Socialist Workers 2000 Campaign

Featured speakers:

James Harris Harris, 52, is a garment worker and member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees from Atlanta, Georgia. He has participated in the fight for Black rights, in mobilizations against U.S. imperialism and its wars, and in working-class politics for over three decades. Harris was the 1996 Socialist Workers candidate for president.

Margaret Trowe Trowe, 52, is a packinghouse worker and member of the UFCW from Austin, Minnesota. She became active in socialist politics through participating in the movements for civil rights for Blacks and against the U.S. war in Vietnam. This May, Trowe participated in the U.S. delegation to the National Association of Small Farmers in Havana, Cuba. She is active in supporting struggles of workers and farmers in the Midwest.

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New Zealand meeting celebrates life of communist fighter — page 6

Strikers, replacements in Washington beat decertification of union

BY PAUL MORRISSETTE

SUNNYSIDE, Washington—A stunning blow against union busting at Valley Manufactured Housing was registered here when replacement workers voted overwhelmingly with strikers to keep the union June 6. The vote totals were 192 for the union and 69 against. The official count was 149 to 69 because the company had challenged the votes of 43 strikers.

The 130 members of Local 2739 of the Western Council of Industrial Workers have been on strike against the modular home builder since August 1999. The strikers have kept up daily pickets and also regularly leafleted at retail outlets where the company's homes are sold.

In April, after 10 months of being unable to break the resolve of the mostly Mexican strikers, the bosses at Valley Manufactured Housing decided to try a new tack. They organized to have a replacement worker petition the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) for a union decertification election. The NLRB, a government agency that claims neutrality in labor disputes, moved quickly to support this strikebreaking maneuver when it approved the election only three weeks later.

However, the company and their government backers got a surprise on the day of the decertification vote. They had backed the election in the expectation that the replacement workers, who outnumbered the strikers by about 200 to 130, would support the company against the union.

Balloting in the morning was held on company property, guaranteeing that almost all the replacement workers would vote. The afternoon balloting was held outside the plant. Since many of the strikers have had to find other work, including some picking fruit and vegetables in the fields, a number were not able to turn out for the vote. According to the *Yakima Herald-Republic* 176 replacement workers and 85 strikers voted.

Strike leader Rogelio Montes said the company tried to bolster the antiunion vote by challenging the votes of 43 strikers.

"They said these workers couldn't cast a ballot because their green cards had expired. They claimed that others had taken other jobs, so they had left the strike and couldn't vote," said Montes. Even with these 43 votes left uncounted, the union still won the election by a more than 2-to-1 margin.

The day before the vote, the strikers were joined on their picket line by two locked-out Kaiser workers. They had decided to help the strikers at Valley Manufactured Housing after learning more about the decertification vote a day earlier at the 3,000-strong farm workers march in Pasco. A few other unionists joined the picket as well.

As is their daily routine, the strikers set up two rows of dozens of strike signs facing the two directions where workers would be driving into the plant. The pickets themselves set up their line at the one large gate that is the only entrance. Among the regular picket signs were ones in Spanish and English reading: "Vote Yes, Vote Union."

Campaign to win replacements to union

After that the picket line took on a different look than the many lines this reporter and the other supporting unionists had been on. As the replacement workers drove in to chants, mostly in Spanish, of, "Vote yes, vote for the union," "vote for yourself not the company!" many of them were greeted by name by the strikers.

For their part, dozens of replacement workers waved to the strikers, a few gave the thumbs up, and some said they were voting with the strikers. One worker stopped his car, got a union T-shirt from one of the strikers, put it on, and then drove into work.

Antonio Larios was one of the strikers on the picket line. A lead man in the ceiling department for two and a half years, he explained that after the announcement of the decertification election the strikers had organized house meetings and discussions at the union hall with many of the replacement workers. "Some of the strikers have friends from high school and neighbors who are



Militant/Lisa Ahlberg

Strikers and supporters picket Valley Manufactured Housing before decertification vote in Sunnyside, Washington. Workers voted by big margin to keep the union.

inside," he said. "We talked to them. The company told them the union was against them but we told them if it wasn't for the union the wages would be even lower."

Rogelio Montes explained that along with the campaign to talk to the replacement workers outside the plant they had also sent a small handful of strikers back into the plant to talk to people on the inside.

Montes said: "At first people were mad at us because the company was telling them that the only thing the union wanted was for them to lose their jobs. We talked to them about the need to be united against the company. We were scared at first, when the election was announced, but not after talking to the workers," he explained.

In fact, this confidence was reflected in the strikers on the picket line. When asked what they thought would be the outcome of the vote, they said in a matter of fact way, "We're going to win."

Later in the day at the lunch break, when many workers drove out of the plant and others sat in the parking lot eating, the strikers pulled out a megaphone and spoke to the workers. They explained how the company treated people when there was no union and that the strikers were fighting for better pay and working conditions, in the long run, for all the workers.

One of the main demands of the strike is a wage raise. Workers start at \$6.65 an hour and after five years may reach top pay of \$8.50. The strikers are also demanding an end to forced overtime and no increase in medical payments.

The plan by the company to use the decertification election to break the strike has had the effect instead of strengthening it. Strikers got more involved in defending the union and won a big victory.

"The strikers are happy," said Montes. "They see that the people inside want rep-

resentation. The people inside are unhappy with the way they are treated. Just before the election they were treated better inside, but we used the megaphone and house calls to explain that was only temporary. They agreed with us."

The strikers are now planning to have more meetings with the workers inside. A celebration with food is planned on the picket line for June 16. As well, the strikers are now in a stronger position to garner more solidarity from the labor movement. Only the week before the vote they received a warm reception when they spoke to more than 200 Boeing workers in Seattle attending the union meeting of International Association of Machinists Local 751A.

In a message of thanks to the unionists who had supported the fight to stop the decertification of the union, Montes said the unionists sent one more message to Valley Manufactured Housing. "We want them to negotiate a fair contract now and [we told them] that every single worker forms part of the union and no matter what they do we are always going to [be] together."

Macario Ramos, a worker for eight years at Valley Manufactured Housing, was part of the first strike there in 1995 when they won the union. "The fight has never stopped," he said, indicating that he has every intention of continuing to struggle.

THE MILITANT

Build solidarity with fighting workers

The 'Militant' is campaigning to get out the truth about labor struggles erupting in Minnesota: the meat packers fight for a union at Dakota Premium, the hotel workers strike, and the walkout at Pepsi. The 'Militant' helps working-class fighters forge broader links. Don't miss an issue!



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Steelworkers picket Kaiser ore unloading at Port of Tacoma

BY JOHN NAUBERT
AND CHRIS RAYSON

TACOMA, Washington—Locked-out Steelworkers from Kaiser Aluminum set up a round-the-clock picket at the Port of Tacoma June 14, preventing the unloading of the *Cupid Feather*, an alumina ore ship. The alumina is destined for Kaiser's Tacoma smelter and its Spokane Mead smelter. Longshore workers are refusing to unload the ship while the picket is up.

Two days later the Superior Court of Washington for Pierce County issued a temporary restraining order limiting the number of pickets to no more than 12, but allowing the workers, who are members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA), to maintain their line.

The court order also restricts steelworkers from contact with longshoremen and states, "Defendants may not block ingress or egress from the Kaiser-operated conveyor or Kaiser-leased facilities at the Port of Tacoma."

Another hearing is scheduled for June 27

on whether to make the temporary injunction permanent.

Despite the court restrictions, the USWA won a victory in asserting their right to picket the port. About 50 steelworkers and supporters set up picket lines on Saturday, June 10, on the docks, immediately provoking a confrontation with the Port of Tacoma authorities and the Tacoma police.

Jon Youngdahl, a USWA spokesman, told the *Spokesman-Review* the union has a "right to be on the pier picketing that ship." Youngdahl was arrested Saturday for trespassing. Another arrest was made June 10 when cops in riot gear waded into the crowd of demonstrators and grabbed a picket.

Despite the heavy police presence, steelworkers kept the picket up initially until June 12, when it was suspended by the union while negotiations were taking place between the USWA and Kaiser. Those talks recessed until June 28 and the picketing resumed June 14.

Meanwhile, Kaiser Aluminum announced plans to shut down the three pot



Erv Schleufer

USWA members picket to prevent unloading of alumina ore ship at Tacoma dock

lines at the Tacoma smelter, laying off 281 replacement workers. Another 120 will be laid off at the Mead smelter in Spokane. The company cites rising electricity costs—and not the impact of the picket lines—as the reason.

"It's a little bit of both," said Art Hubbard, a locked-out steelworker who worked six years at the Tacoma plant. "Kaiser can't

stand to lose more money. If they shut it [the pot lines] down it will cost them millions to clean it up."

John Naubert is a member of the International Association of Machinists. Chris Rayson belongs to the United Transportation Union. Scott Breen, a member of the IAM, contributed to this article.

Striking nurses in California oppose forced overtime

BY ROBERT DEES

STANFORD, California—"We're fighting for what we believe in," explained striker Rita Nevarez on the picket line. "Health-care workers should have good health care."

More than 1,700 nurses at Stanford University Hospital and its associated Packard Children's Hospital struck June 7. The key issues include safe staffing levels, better wages, and improved health benefits.

"There are now 100 unfilled openings," explained striker Paul Cole on the picket line. Due to this short staffing, "nurses are tired because of lots of overtime, and are in

less able to function safely."

The hospital administration claims that overtime is voluntary, Cole explained, "we say it's mandatory." What the administration does is approach a nurse at the end of the shift and announce that there is no one coming in to take over. The individual nurse is then faced with the choice of working overtime or abandoning the patients. In this manner the administration exploits the nurses' greater sense of responsibility for the patients to compel them to work.

"But we have a life too," added striker Cindy Lyon. "They go home at five o'clock

to kids and family. We want to too." The union seeks more power to determine safe staffing levels. One picket-line sign read, "Exhausted Nurse Needs Intensive Care."

"The last two years have been difficult because patient care hours and patient services have been cut. As a result, there have been increasing problems with implementation of care," read the union's fact sheet.

Wages are also an important issue. "The hospital is offering 4 percent and 4 percent" wage increases over the next two years, Cole said, "we're asking 11.5 percent and 9.5 percent." The Stanford hospitals are in Santa

Clara county, in the heart of Silicon Valley. The stock market bubble, led by computer stocks, has driven housing costs in this area far beyond the reach of working people.

"I came from Virginia in March, where I was able to support myself and two children on my salary there. Here I can't support just myself—I have to live with someone," Lyon said. The wage and staffing issues are closely related since one reason for the shortage of nurses is that they cannot afford to live in the area at these wages.

"In 34 years as a nurse I've never before been on strike or on a picket line," said Nevarez, but "they've nickel-and-dimed us to death." "We want a cap on health care [costs]," she continued. Under the current plan, the nurses have a choice among several HMO plans they consider inadequate. "We can't afford Blue Cross/Blue Shield, and many community physicians won't accept all the companies on our plan." Management is also trying to split the union by introducing a two-tier system, with worse benefits for new hires, Cole explained.

The administration contracted with Denver-based U.S. Nursing Corp. to provide 500 scab nurses from as far away as Vermont, Alabama, and Pennsylvania. Some of these have already been "let go" for providing false credentials.

Cole said that the hospital management is an "arrogant, top-down team that doesn't ask for input, and ignores it when it gets it. This is not just input from nurses, but from doctors too."

He pointed to the recent fiasco with the University of California at San Francisco (UCSF) hospitals. Management merged, then after two years "demerged" the two systems. As much as \$150 million may have been squandered on this bureaucratic maneuver. Some saw this as a way to break the staff unions at UCSF; others as a way for both hospitals to reduce competition. Few believe that the quality of patient care was a consideration at all.

Perhaps for this reason, the nurses are winning support from at least some of the doctors. Jessica McAlpine, an OBGYN resident, stopped by the picket line to voice her encouragement. "The quality of nursing is phenomenal," she said, "and there has been an excellent relationship between physicians and staff. I want to support them in creating a working environment in which they can continue to provide excellent patient care."

This is the first strike since 1974 for CRONA—The Committee for Recognition of Nursing Achievement—although a walk-out was narrowly averted in 1998.

Miami window workers fight for a union

BY MIKE ITALIE

MIAMI—Workers at RC Aluminum are fighting for a union, and they took that fight public with an enthusiastic rally of more than 100 people in front of the plant June 15.

Along with printed signs put out by Iron Workers Local 272, handmade ones highlighted many of the issues, which included, "\$6 is not a living wage," "Workers want unions," and "No Fear." Protesters chanted "Union, union!" and "Si se puede" (Yes we can).

At the rally workers wore "No Fear" buttons and bandannas, which emphasized their determination to continue the fight despite the firing of three workers for their union activity. Edwin Wilson, one of those dis-

charged by the company, told the crowd that he is "happier than ever because now I have all of you with me. Don't be afraid. Victory is ours!"

Wilson said the typical response by a boss at the aluminum window company to any protest over working conditions is, "If you like it, fine. If you don't, punch out and get out." They don't pay us for the work we do or give us the respect we deserve as working people." Wilson was paid \$7.25 per hour to load, unload, and drive the company's truck.

Conditions at this plant of about 116 workers are similar to those faced by thousands of others. Ivan Suarez, 29, has worked at RC Aluminum for six years and makes \$6.40 per hour. He said they need a union

because there is mistreatment of workers by the company. He pointed to pay of \$5.15 per hour and receiving only two vacation days per year as examples. Many of the workers said the boss pays employees based on favoritism, not seniority.

Alberto Echezabal, with six months at the company, said a union was needed to fight the "inhuman conditions." When asked to compare his experiences as a telephone worker in Cuba and his experiences here, Echezabal explained, "Here there is no freedom of expression. There are people working here for seven years who only make \$5.15 per hour. If you ask for a raise, you're fired."

A number of other unionists from the industrial area bordering Hialeah participated in the rally at the aluminum window plant. This included 20 postal workers from a nearby facility and several garment workers who are members of the United Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE). Dozens of iron workers who install the windows came out to help the union organizing drive. RC Aluminum workers point out that they often work side-by-side with members of the iron workers doing the same installation job, and that the discussions between the two played an important role in convincing them that they also needed a union.

UNITE members engaged in a fight to win their first contract at Goya Foods, located down the road from RC Aluminum, came to the rally. The workers there voted in the union in October 1998. The company fired four workers after they attended a union rally last July. In early May the National Labor Relations Board requested an injunction against the company, demanding it recognize the union and reinstate all four to full-time positions.

Mike Italie is a garment worker in Miami. Rollande Girard, a sewing machine operator, and Mary Ann Schmidt contributed to this article.



Militant/Eric Simpson

RC Aluminum rally in Miami. Sign in Spanish says "\$6.00 an hour is not a living wage."

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'Everyone should get a copy of this paper,' says meat packer

BY MARY NELL BOCKMAN

NEWARK, New Jersey—This past week we decided to make a big effort to reach out with the issues of the *Militant* reporting on the Dakota Premium Foods fight to workers on the job and at workplaces where struggles have occurred in the last few months. "Si se puede" (yes we can) is a pretty good slogan to characterize the success of our sales of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* this week.

We sold more than 70 copies of the *Militant* in less than two days and ordered 30 more so we didn't run out. We used our Thursday evening sales to get teams out with a special focus on workplaces where struggles have occurred over the past two years, such as UPS, the docks at Port Newark, and the Continental terminal at the airport. We sold 30 papers that day, which included teams in working-class communities.

A Teamster who works at Anheuser-Busch stopped by the Thursday night table in his neighborhood in North Newark. He told us about a union action coming up at his plant, and bought a *Militant*. The Saturday morning rally drew hundreds of construction workers protesting the use of non-union contractors at the plant. Participants bought 22 *Militants*.

On Friday morning a sales team hit the shift change at the Coca Cola plant in Teterboro, selling four copies of the *Militant*. Workers there waged a three-day strike two weeks ago. A sales team also visited the plant gate at the Ford assembly plant in Metuchen, New Jersey, Saturday morning and sold five copies of the *Militant* and one *PM* supplement. Kari Sachs, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress who works in the plant, sold eight more papers inside during the week.

"Some of the people who bought the paper have read it before," said Sachs. "I had pointed to the resistance by meat packers at the Dakota Premium plant as an example of how a rank-and-file leadership could develop in the unions. One of my co-workers responded saying, 'I really want to get that paper, because we need to figure out how to do that here.' She mentioned how we need to fight things like sexual harassment of women and the need for workers to stick together."

Sachs said another Ford co-worker who bought the *Militant* was part of a campaign to get a union at the Johnson Controls plant up the street from Ford. When he learned about the sit-down strike at the packing-house he remarked, "I've never heard of anything like that happening."

Nancy Rosenstock, Socialist Workers

candidate for U.S. Senate in New Jersey, said *Militant* supporters had their best week of sales yet on the job at the garment shop in Perth Amboy where she works, selling eight *PM* supplements and one copy of the *Militant* to co-workers. A big topic of discussion there was the U.S. Navy out of Vieques contingent in the Puerto Rican Day Parade. A worker at a meatpacking plant in Newark, organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), sold two *Militants* and a *PM* supplement as well.

We kept the momentum going on Sunday as we campaigned for the Socialist Workers candidates, selling 18 *Militants* and 8 *PM* supplements. That day we also sent a team to Trenton to meet with a potential supporter of the campaign who purchased a copy of *New International* no. 11, which features the article "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War." He offered to help our petitioning efforts to get our presidential ticket on the ballot. That team also went to Bridgeton and Vineland where they met with three farmers.

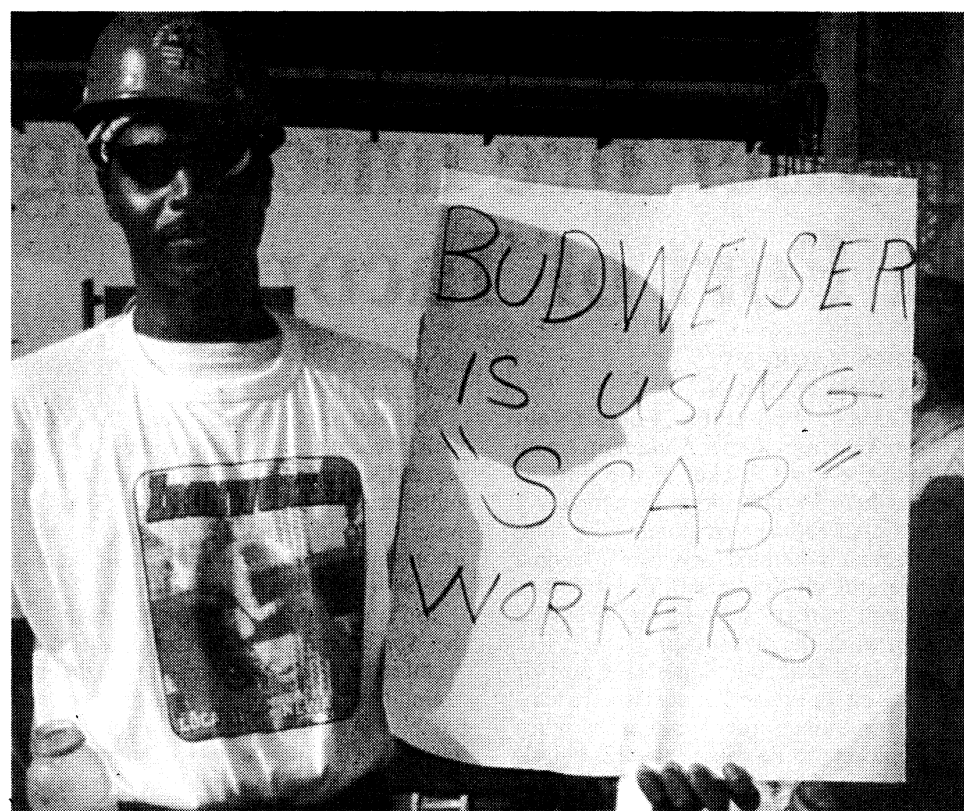
"We staked out some spots for petitioning in Bridgeton before we met with one of the farmers there," said Lee Oleson, a UFCW member in Newark. "He called up one of his friends, who is also a farmer, to join a discussion with us, which included among other topics the miners' fight for lifetime health care, the Clinton administration's assault on Social Security, and the farmers' trip to Cuba." One of them renewed his sub to the *Militant* and the other one bought a copy saying he would get a sub the next time. The farmer in Vineland, who is also a *Militant* subscriber, bought a copy of *New International* no. 4. He was interested in reading the article, "The Crisis Facing Working Farmers."

It was a good week for socialist workers in Newark. All together we sold almost 100 copies of the *Militant* and 25 *PM* supplements from Thursday to Sunday night.



BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

As the article above shows, partisans of the *Militant* and *PM* are meeting good responses from workers across the country in the campaign to get out the truth about the Dakota Premium meat packers battle for a union. Sam Manuel, a rail worker in Washington, wrote, "We sold 18 copies of the *Militant* in a little over an hour at the large Smithfield meatpacking plant in Smithfield, Virginia. Workers were happy to hear of the fight by nonunion meat packers in St. Paul and spoke of the conditions they face in the plant. Recently several workers passed out on the kill floor due to heat and last year one worker died. 'Everyone of us should get a copy of this paper,' said Edna Adams a shop steward at the plant."



Militant/Kari Sachs

Worker at June 17 rally at Anheuser-Busch in Newark, New Jersey, protesting company's use of nonunion contractors in plant. Sales team sold 22 papers there.

The *Militant* is getting around to labor battles erupting throughout the St. Paul-Minneapolis area, said Becky Ellis, a member of the Communications Workers of America. "We sold four papers to workers at the Hilton whose strike has now spread to four hotels. We also sold a couple papers to strikers at Pespi, and seven copies of the *Militant* and four *PM* supplements to workers at Dakota Premium this week." Ellis said they also sold a number of papers to workers at factories organized by the Steelworkers union, including six at Northstar Steel.

One sales team went to meet auto workers at the Ford credit union where they sold 14 *Militants*. Roberta Black, a member of the Young Socialists, said one of the workers commented, "We have the same problem at Ford," referring to the meat packers protest against the speed up of production. "They were surprised when I told them the plant was nonunion."

Ellis said the fight at Dakota Premium has had a deep impact on many people, including supporters who had not been around for awhile. One of them, a member of the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers Union at the 3-M plant, called up and asked if she could get some papers to sell. *Militant* supporters who work at the Dakota Premium Foods plant had two of their co-workers attend the Militant Labor Forum, and supporters in Chippewa Falls drove up with two co-workers from a meatpacking plant there. One of the Dakota Premium workers took a bundle of *PM*s to sell to other workers.

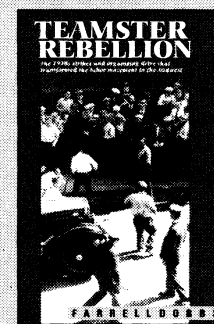
In Miami, Rachele Fruit, an airline worker, said on the morning of June 19 she went on a sales team that included a farmer, Karl Butts, to the Lykes meatpacking plant in Plant City, Florida. "We sold 10 copies of the *Militant*, 1 copy of the *PM* June edition, and 5 *PM* supplements," she said. "The workers told us they are facing speedup

plant conditions too, and one said, 'A sit-down strike! That's what we need to do too.'"

Mary Ann Schmidt said the previous week supporters in Miami had also received good responses to the socialist periodicals. "We had a very successful sale at the plant gate of a UNITE-organized factory where we sold 3 copies of the *Militant*, 1 *PM* supplement, and 1 *PM* subscription," she said. "The workers there spoke about their conflict with the company during contract negotiations, the main issue being a guarantee of 40 hours of work. We also sold four *PM* supplements on the job at a nonunion garment plant. In Hialeah, a predominantly Cuban working-class neighborhood, we sold 1 *Militant*, 3 copies of *PM*, and 5 *PM* supplements. Most of the people we met identified with the struggle of the workers in St. Paul because of the conditions they face on the job. In a Haitian and Black community we sold 10 copies of the *Militant*."

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Young Socialists Fund Drive Final Totals

City	Goal	Raised	%
Birmingham	450	504	112%
Tucson	200	217	109%
Los Angeles	450	475	106%
Miami	400	400	100%
Chicago	800	650	81%
Detroit	550	438	80%
Washington	200	160	80%
Santa Cruz	250	181	72%
San Francisco	300	200	67%
Cleveland	350	211	60%
Philadelphia	500	287	57%
Newark	700	374	53%
Twin Cities	650	260	40%
New York	1000	358	36%
Seattle	350	120	34%
Atlanta	300	67	22%
Fresno	200	0	0%
Ft. Collins	75	0	0%
Valdosta	200	0	0%
Other		100	
TOTAL	\$7,925	\$5,002	71%
Should be	\$7,000	\$7,000	100%

YOUNG SOCIALISTS AROUND THE WORLD

YS raises \$5,000 in spring fund drive

The Young Socialists is an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the Young Socialists write to P.O. Box 33 Times Square Post Office, New York, NY 10108, or call (646) 263-8974, or send an e-mail to: young_socialists@hotmail.com

BY JASON ALESSIO

NEW YORK—The Young Socialists concluded the 10-week fund drive with a final push to come as close to the goal of \$7,000 as possible. Nationally, the YS ended up raising a total of \$5,002, making 71 percent of the goal.

The Young Socialists organizes twice-yearly fund drives to insure it can function on a nationwide and international basis. This includes covering the costs of a national office, now located in New York, and making it possible for YS leaders to travel and work with YS members joining working-class resistance in a timely manner, as well

as participate in international meetings.

Chapters and units of the YS across the United States set out on a 10-week campaign to raise money as part of their regular weekly political activity. There were four chapters that reached and exceeded their fund-raising goals and several others that came very close.

The YS chapter in Birmingham started with a goal of \$450, and raised it slightly to \$500 over the course of the drive. Romina Green, the chapter organizer, explained, "It wasn't one thing in particular. It was the hard effort by all of us in the chapter and a result of collective work. We focused on it from the very beginning and it was a central discussion at every meeting of the chapter."

Green also noted that the chapter incorporated fund-raising into educational weekends and recruitment work aimed at building the YS. "It was always a conscious part of the weekly political work we were carrying out," Green stated, summing up the success of the fund drive.

Louis Turner, a YS member in Tucson, described how the YS unit there surpassed its goal of \$200. "What really put us over the top was the personal pledges by the YS members," he said. Additionally, a big success was sales of a series of sculptures made by Chessie Molano, a YS member in Tucson. The sculptures were of different faces entitled, "Faces of Struggle," and were sold at various political events.

The YS in Los Angeles also exceeded its goal of \$450. Shem Morton, the YS organizer there, said that they organized to raise funds at a few key events. One of them was a weekend barbecue at the beach where supporters of the communist movement could get together, relax, and socialize. The YS organized the meal and had a fund pitch as well.

Units that met their goal were Birmingham, Los Angeles, Miami, and Tucson, Other areas, including Chicago, Detroit, Kent, and Washington, D.C., came close to reaching their goals.

U.S. Navy resumes bombing Vieques

Continued from front page

quarters of the island. The U.S. Navy suspended its operations in April 1999, after a Navy warplane dropped two "stray" bombs that killed Vieques resident David Sanes, detonating a wave of protests that continue today.

In January, colonial governor Pedro Rosselló signed a deal with U.S. president William Clinton agreeing to the resumption of U.S. bombing practice on the island in exchange for a referendum by Vieques residents on whether the Navy will remain there or leave by May 2003. Immediate withdrawal of the U.S. military will not be on the U.S.-organized ballot. In May, Clinton ordered FBI agents, U.S. marshals, and U.S. marines to evict protesters camped out on the bombing range.

Steady reinforcement of protests

Since then, however, there has been a steady stream of protesters entering the Navy-occupied territory. As one group of demonstrators is detained and kicked out, new ones have entered, seeking to disrupt U.S. military operations. Fifty-six people were arrested on June 17.

On June 13, Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) leaders Rubén Berrios and Jorge Fernández were the first protesters to be convicted and sentenced for trespassing on the Navy firing range in Vieques. U.S. judge Juan Pérez Giménez, no friend of the independence movement, gave them what was widely considered token sentences.

System on trial

PIP president Berrios was sentenced to six hours in prison and the sentence of party environmental advisor Fernández was four hours. After serving the time, Berrios and Fernández were released to a crowd of cheering supporters.

Defense lawyers for the two did not cross examine the seven witnesses for the prosecution, nor did they call any for the defense.

Like many in the independence movement, the two do not recognize the jurisdiction of the U.S. courts in Puerto Rico.

"What is on trial here," said Berrios in a statement read to the court in Spanish, "is the system that degrades Puerto Rico and contradicts the principles that the United States claims to defend. Whatever sentence



Militant/Hilda Cuzco

Contingent on June 11 Puerto Rican Day Parade in New York demanded the end of all military exercises and withdrawal of the U.S. Navy.

this court may choose to impose will merely underscore the undemocratic and obsolete nature of the prevailing regime in Puerto Rico. The harsher the penalty the stronger our will to fight."

In the telephone interview, Vieques leader

Rabin reported that the fight to get the U.S. military out of the Puerto Rican island has been receiving wider international support. "We've gotten messages of solidarity from south Korea, Japan, Panama, and the Philippines," he said.

One thing all those countries have in common is a long struggle against U.S. military bases. Protests took place recently in a South Korean village to demand U.S. forces stop using their area for bombing exercises.

Ron Richards in San Juan contributed to this article.

St. Louis socialist slams cop killings

The following statement was issued by Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate in Missouri. Kennedy is a garment worker and member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

The cold blooded killing of two unarmed Black men, Earl Murray and Ronald Beasley, by police on June 12 in Berkeley, [Missouri] was a brutal act and an assault on the democratic rights of working people. On the pretext of a "drug investigation," cops from several local police departments and from the federal Drug Enforcement Agency, part of a multi-jurisdictional drug task force, surrounded the car of Murray and Beasley in broad daylight in the parking lot of a fast food restaurant.

Eyewitnesses on the day of the cop killing said that a police vehicle rammed into the back of their car, trapping them, and fired 20 or more times, killing both of the men. The next day the cops said that the car of Murray and Beasley backed into the police van and jammed.

Even though the car could not move, the cops claimed they had the "right" to shoot because they feared that the car would hit them. It wasn't until two days after the killing that the cops admitted that the men were unarmed.

These two killings are part of a pattern of police violence that has led with increasing frequency, from one end of the country to the other, to cold-blooded killings by cops.

More federal funds are used to step up heavier and more deadly arming and equipping of police forces. Appeal and parole rights have been restricted. In the last seven years, the annual number of state-sponsored electrocutions, hangings, and deaths by lethal injection have tripled, while the number of defendants charged with federal capital offenses has tripled since adoption of the Clinton-initiated Federal Death Penalty Act of 1994.

The U.S. prison population today is some eight times what it was in 1971 and nearly twice its level since Clinton took office in 1992. Under the code words of fighting terrorism, drugs, and crime, the Clinton administration—with the backing of both the Democratic and Republican parties—has overseen sweeping attacks on democratic rights and the beefing up of police forces across the country.

The job of the cops is to mete out punishment to working people. They particularly target those of oppressed nationalities: Blacks, Latinos, immigrant workers, and anyone else who stands up for their own rights and those of others. It's not a question of rooting out the "bad apples." This is what they all are trained to do. The role of the cops is to protect and serve the interests of capitalist rule. Police brutality is not an aberration. It is part of the job of the cops to brutalize working people to protect the prop-

erty of the rich.

We see more strikes and struggles by working people and farmers in response to the attacks on our working and living conditions.

As the economic crisis of capitalism deepens, so will these struggles. The role of the cops is to protect and serve the interests of the rich. They are used and will be used more against workers who are on strike or organizing protests against attacks from the employers.

We can bring pressure to bear to jail cops

who brutalize us. The cops that tortured the Haitian immigrant, Abner Louima in New York, went to jail because thousands of working people rallied in the street and demanded justice.

We need to organize protests against the brutal killing of Earl Murray and Ronald Beasley. The cops should be prosecuted and jailed. Protests send a message that cop violence will not be tolerated.

Contact the Socialist Workers campaign: P.O. Box 19166, 2910 Meramec Street, St. Louis, Mo. 63118 or call: (314) 924-2500.

A million working families cut from Medicaid

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Nearly a million working families in 15 states have been cut off from Medicaid coverage since Congress and the states began slashing welfare programs in 1996, a newly released study shows.

According to the organization Families USA, the number of workers who are parents with low incomes enrolled in Medicaid the states surveyed declined by 27 percent to 2.55 million in December 1999 from 3.5 million in January 1996.

Vowing to "end welfare as we know it," the Clinton administration led a bipartisan effort to pass legislation in August 1996. Clinton signed into law the elimination of many federal welfare programs, including Aid to Families with Dependent Children, which was part of the Social Security Act of 1935. Many state legislatures followed through with additional cuts.

Under federal law, people leaving welfare are automatically entitled to health insurance under Medicaid for six months to a year, but in a number of instances states have not provided even this coverage. According to the study, some parents who no longer received welfare were also automatically kicked off Medicaid because of computer programs that linked the two, even though their income levels still qualified them to receive Medicaid assistance.

Hundreds of thousands of children lost Medicaid coverage when their families lost welfare benefits.

From January 1996 to December 1999 enrollment of parents dropped by nearly 156,000 or 19 percent in California; 123,000, or 25 percent in New York; and 106,000 or 46 percent in Texas. The state of Georgia cut its Medicaid rolls by 50 percent, Ohio by 42 percent, and Florida by 37 percent.

Many of those losing these benefits found themselves working at low-wage jobs with no health insurance, or in some cases where coverage was offered premiums were higher than workers could afford to pay.

Most states now impose strict limits on the income that a person can earn and still qualify for Medicaid. In 32 states, parents who work full time at the minimum wage

of \$5.15 an hour are considered to have too much income to qualify for Medicaid. According to Ronald Pollack, executive director of Families USA, "In Louisiana, Virginia, and Texas, parents working at the minimum wage are disqualified from Medicaid if they work more than 12, 17, and 18 hours a week, respectively."

The attacks and probes against Social Security continue, in which it is presented as an individual retirement plan. Moves to allow individuals or the government to "invest" a portion of payroll taxes have been floated by both Democratic and Republican party politicians. This past week Democratic presidential candidate Albert Gore proposed a "retirement savings plus" plan, which he claims would be a supplement to Social Security based on investing in the stock

market through a 401(k)-type retirement plan. The government would provide matching funds to encourage individuals to save up to \$1,500 per year tax-free in accounts managed by private financial institutions, which will invest the money in "broad-based equities," bonds, and government securities.

Gore's plan comes shortly after Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush proposed allowing individuals to invest a portion of their Social Security payroll taxes in the stock market.

"There can be little doubt that the political sands are shifting in the Social Security debate," wrote Deborah McGregor in the June 20 *Financial Times*. "Only last month, Mr. Gore had attacked Mr. Bush's plan for individual Social Security investment accounts as 'stock market roulette.'"

UMWA strikers hold line against P&M

BY JAN MILLER

FORT COLLINS, Colorado—Members of the United Mine Workers of America at the McKinley mine in New Mexico and the Kemmerer mine in Wyoming remain confident in their strikes against Pittsburg and Midway Coal. Miners walked out of these two mines May 15 and May 28, respectively. No progress in negotiations has been reported.

United Steelworkers of America (USWA) members at the FMC and General Chemical trona mines in nearby Green River, Wyoming, have sent contributions of food and money to UMWA Local 1307 in Kemmerer. At the FMC mine, the 854 workers who are members of USWA Local 13214 are themselves in the middle of contract negotiations. Their contract expires June 30.

Strikers at the McKinley mine, UMWA Local 1332, are getting support from the New Mexico AFL-CIO. Local president Lawrence Oliver told the Gallup *Independent* June 16 that "shipments of pallets of bottled water, canned and packaged goods arrived Saturday and Thursday.... Another shipment, this one from the Arizona AFL-CIO, will arrive at the local's office in Tse

Bonito on Monday."

News of the strikes is beginning to spread to other parts of the country. The Illinois Black Lung Association sent a letter of solidarity June 18 to the two locals on strike. It stated, in part, "Miners here are facing the same kinds of company demands for longer hours and attacks on pensions and medical benefits. We are behind you 100%."

Pittsburg and Midway (P&M) Coal Co. has been owned by Chevron since 1984. It operates five mines in the United States besides McKinley and Kemmerer—York Canyon in Raton, New Mexico, Farco Mine in Laredo, Texas, and North River mine in Alabama. About 90 percent of P&M coal is sold to electric utilities. In 1998 Chevron announced plans to sell the remaining five mines as part of a plan to get out of the coal business and center on oil, gas, and chemicals. This is part of a trend by other large oil companies.

Messages of solidarity and donations to Local 1332 can be sent to: P.O. Box 3750, Window Rock, AZ 86515. To contact the Kemmerer strikers write: UMWA Local 1307, P.O. Box 261, Diamondville, WY 83116.

Meeting celebrates life of John Martin, communist fighter in New Zealand

BY JANET ROTH

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand—“John’s life revolved around the working class and building the communist movement. He never lost confidence that fellow workers would become fighters and communists, just as he had,” said Mike Tucker at a meeting here June 17 to celebrate the life of John Martin.

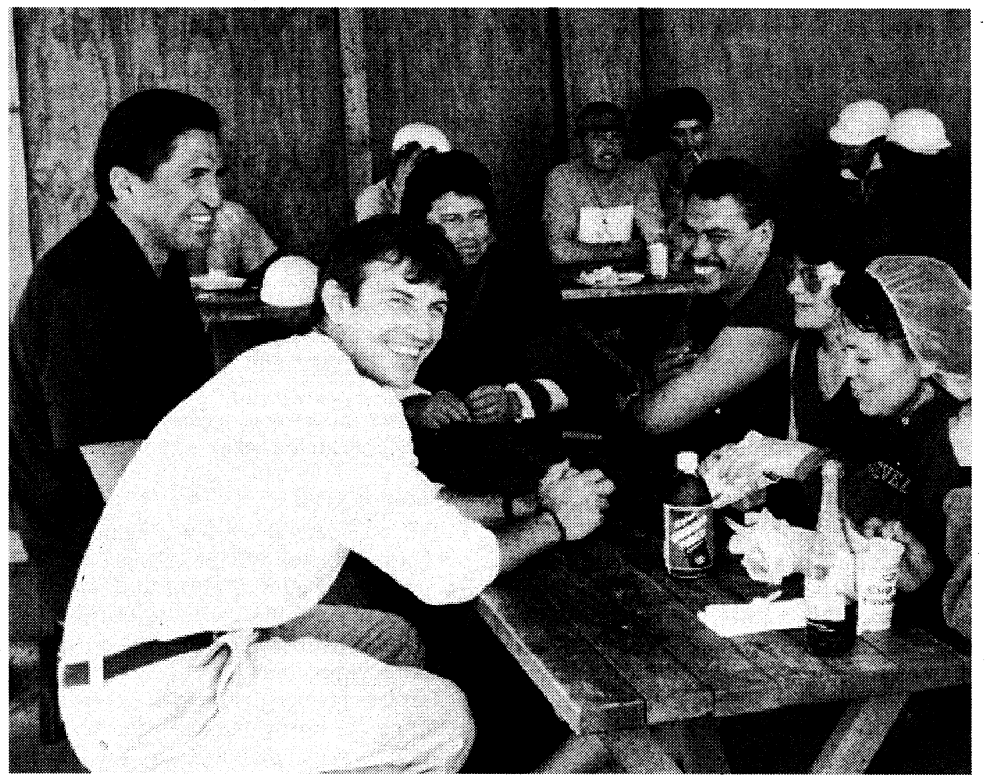
Tucker, the organizer of the Political Committee of the Communist League, chaired the meeting alongside Annalucia Vermunt, organizer of the Communist League’s Christchurch branch. The Communist League, and its forerunner, the Socialist Action League, was John Martin’s party for 17 years, until his death on May 25 at the age of 58.

John, who was also known by his second

name, Moki, grew up in a rural area of the North Island with a predominantly Maori population.

John Martin spent most of his adult life as a meat worker, in his younger years moving around cities and towns in both Australia and New Zealand. At times he also worked other jobs, from fishing, to sheep shearing, to casual work on construction sites. Through this he gained a deep appreciation of the importance of unions. “John became a rank-and-file union organizer and leader,” Tucker explained.

For a number of years, John worked at the Makarewa freezing works in Invercargill. One of those who worked with him there was Dave Eastlake, currently national president of the Meat Workers Union (MWU). In a message to the meeting,



John Martin (far left) talking with meat packers in Los Angeles during 1989 visit.

Eastlake wrote of John, “I can assure you from my involvement with him he was indeed a true fighter for unions and what they stand for.”

John began to develop a revolutionary,

A worker-bolshevik ‘in for the duration’

The following is a message from Jack Barnes and Mary-Alice Waters, on behalf of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States, to the June 16 meeting in Christchurch, New Zealand, celebrating the life of Communist League member John Martin (see accompanying article).

Neither of us ever had the opportunity to work closely with John, nor did we know him well. But in looking back on the occasions over almost two decades when we met and talked with him, we are both struck by two recollections in particular.

First is the immediate political confidence one felt in his presence. This did not stem from his political strengths and courage alone. Those are qualities he shared with many others, and we learned of them indirectly from comrades other than John. He didn’t talk that much about himself.

But John’s attributes reminded us of a number of the older comrades who were the cadre backbone of the SWP, its proletarian core, when we joined in the early 1960s. Those working-class cadres were for us an irreplaceable transmission belt of a certain kind. They exuded the proletarian attitudes and virtues, the discipline and calm determination, the hard-earned literacy that accompanied a breadth of interests, the concentration on what is to be done, not on oneself, that above all gave us great confidence in the class we were part of and its political vanguard we were joining.

Second, when we learned of John’s death, we realized that neither of us could imag-

ine him dying anywhere but within the ranks of the party. His commitment to the road of the revolutionary proletariat was not a tour of duty, even a long one; it was for a lifetime. You knew that whatever the ups and downs might be, whatever the ebb and flow of energies, John was in for the duration. Like other workers, in the United States and elsewhere, who late in life find their party and the program that reflects their strong political yearnings, he held onto it all the more firmly.

The qualities John exhibited were ones that even the best of the young people who come to the proletarian movement develop only with time and through collective combat experience. The lightness with which he wore his deep internationalism, like his Maori being and heritage, seemed simply part of him, expressions of his class consciousness.

In John’s presence, all of a sudden you found yourself relaxing. It was an unusual experience. You realized you were in good and competent and trustworthy hands. Hands that seemed familiar. There was mutual acceptance. You just relaxed and enjoyed his company.

Many other things about John we are only learning now. We were grateful to get copies of the messages Patrick [O’Neill] and Ron [Poulsen] sent to the memorial meeting for that reason. Each of them talked of things we did not know before, as did Mike in his article for the [June 19] *Militant*. We did not have the good fortune to cross paths with John in Nicaragua, for example. But neither Nicaragua nor Ohio—where many

of us did cross paths—were the same as spending some time with him in his own country, especially in a visit to Christchurch, surrounded by the conditions that formed him. That somehow made it more possible to understand the universal and accessible attributes John carved out of those particular and individually transformed conditions. The accessible was crucial; a young comrade was made to feel by John that she or he could develop and emulate the strengths one sensed in him. They seemed not primarily “his” but potentially “ours” if we worked together.

The course of John’s life melds seamlessly into the conditions of struggle that are emerging in the world today as your meeting takes place. We are reminded of this here when we see the character of the struggles now exploding in Minnesota. John would have been completely in his element among the rank and file meat workers who have said, “Enough!”—“*Si se puede*”—and would have taken the lead, moving into the vanguard of working people in the United States, fighting not only for life and limb, but also for their humanity, their dignity, and their future and ours. Like many of them, John more than once in his life found himself traveling whatever roads and distances were necessary to find work or to be wherever the forward troops were fighting.

Likewise he would have reveled in the news of the stunning 250,000-strong march for Aboriginal land rights—what the *Militant*’s worker-correspondents described as one of the largest political outpourings ever in Australia’s history—that took place in Sydney May 28, protesting the government’s racist policies. John discussed and answered questions asked by ignorant Americans about either side of the Tasman with seeming equal concreteness and identification. His comfortable responses were based on his own work and life experience. Not prejudices.

A new generation is only beginning to learn the implications for action in these new conditions of struggle that are emerging today. An older generation is being given the opportunity to put in practice what they always intended to do—but had no guarantee, and more and more no expectation, in fact—that they would have the chance to do.

John’s last period of work, like all of yours, took place within a transition occurring worldwide in which all around us we witness a growing tenacity and resilience of a broadening vanguard of working people—on the land and in the mines and factories. You can see the future beginning to unfold. This is also a world where the attributes and virtues John embodied have increasing weight.

We can commend John Martin’s proletarian course and his character to fighting toilers of all generations and all countries and urge emulation. And we can unreservedly commend his party to their greater knowledge and collaboration.

anticapitalist outlook, and was on the lookout for a vehicle that would enable him to act politically on these conclusions. In 1983, already in his forties, he met the Socialist Action League when he got involved in protests against the U.S. government’s invasion of Grenada. The following year John joined the League.

Since 1978 the Socialist Action League had been carrying through a turn to the industrial unions, building a fraction in the MWU and other unions, and centering its political campaigns there.

In a message, Tony Lane explained that “to meet John and get him to rapidly join the movement was a big boost” to this effort to proletarianize the party. Lane was part of an effort to rebuild a branch of the League in Christchurch at that time in response to a strike by meat workers in the city. “So to meet up with and win John—who had been a meat worker all his life—helped steer us in the right direction,” he wrote.

Trip to Nicaragua

After joining the League, John continued working in Invercargill for a number of years, becoming part of a branch in the off-season. Bob Aiken, a textile worker and member of the Communist League in Australia, described a visit to Invercargill in 1987 during a nationwide strike by meat workers. “The bosses were sponsoring a return-to-work movement in Southland where John was working. John was among the union militants who helped keep the strike solid,” Aiken told the meeting, describing how John toured the pubs talking to workers and “shoring up support for the strike.”

Aiken participated with John in an 11-member Workers Fact-Finding Tour from New Zealand to Nicaragua in 1985, at the time of the revolution there.

The tour included a visit to the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua, where the leadership of the revolution was carrying out an autonomy plan in response to the demands of the Indian and Black communities in the fight against national oppression. John accompanied one of the tour’s leaders, veteran Maori rights activist Eva Rickard, “discussing through with her what could be learnt from the autonomy plan to advance the fight for Maori rights,” Aiken said.

Prior to going to Nicaragua John was able to attend his first international gathering of the communist movement in the United States and to gain a deeper appreciation of the international character of the working-class struggle and of the communist vanguard of which he was a part.

Aiken told how in Los Angeles John Martin was a guest of Fred Halstead, a veteran leader of the Socialist Workers Party, “and enthusiastically soaked up the opportunity to learn about the decades of struggle that Fred had been involved in.” His internationalism remained an integral feature of his character.

He also had an impact on many of the fighters he met at this and subsequent conferences, or in New Zealand. This was reflected in the range of messages sent to the meeting from Australia, Britain, Canada, Sweden, and the United States. Messages were also read from representatives of sister organizations of the League: Ron Poulsen for the Communist League in Aus-

Continued on page 15



Members of Communist League in New Zealand selling *Militant* and *Pathfinder* books at Waitangi Day, Feb. 6, 1996. Day is an annual focus of protests against racist discrimination and for Maori rights. “We can commend John Martin’s proletarian course and his character to fighting toilers of all generations and all countries and urge emulation. And we can unreservedly commend his party to their greater knowledge and collaboration,” wrote Jack Barnes and Mary-Alice Waters for SWP leadership.

Titan strikers: 'We're in it for the long haul'

BY SUSAN LAMONT

NATCHEZ, Mississippi—"Our union members have accepted that we're in this for the long haul. They're loyal to the picket line. We've all accepted that we're going to have to fight it out to the end," stated strike activist Willie Evans, commenting on how United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 303L members are doing in their 21-month-long fight to defend their union and win a decent contract from Titan Tire. Evans, 49, was a rack handler and tire tester before the strike started September 15, 1998.

The same determination was expressed by other workers on a June 10 visit to the picket line. "No union member has crossed the picket line since about 10 months ago," said strike veteran James White, 56, who is on the line often during the week. White worked as a tire builder for 30 years before the walkout. "One man went in for about

four hours—and came back out. He said he couldn't work under those conditions."

Titan Tire owner Maurice Taylor has been running the plant with scab labor since the strike started. "There's a big turnover of scabs," White added. "They're still not getting much production out of there."

String of accidents at Mississippi plant

There have been a string of accidents and injuries in the plant since the strike started. One of the most serious occurred last October, when carbon black dust ignited at one of the plant's mixing machines, causing an explosion. Two replacement workers were badly burned in the blast. The June 2 *Natchez Democrat* reported that a judge has ruled Titan must pay a \$2,125 fine, imposed earlier by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), following an investigation into the blast. OSHA found

that improperly placed electrical equipment was responsible for the explosion.

The strike began after Titan Tire International owner Maurice Taylor bought the plant from Fidelity Tire Manufacturing Co. in August 1998. Fidelity's parent company, Condere Corp., had filed for bankruptcy in 1997 and laid off hundreds of workers. Out of 500 union members who had been at the plant, only 200 were working as of September 4, 1998, the last day of work under Fidelity. Despite a court order to honor the previous labor contract with the Steelworkers, Taylor immediately began to run roughshod over the union.

Anthony Edwards, 30, had worked as a tire builder for 10 years when the strike started. "The strike wasn't about production," he said, noting that the workers had been setting production records before Fidelity went bankrupt. "When Taylor bought

the plant, he started putting pressure on the union right from the beginning. He really forced us to strike."

Several union officials were fired in the days before the strike. Taylor demanded to be able to recall laid-off workers by job classification, not plant seniority, and contract out certain jobs in the plant. Titan's push for unlimited overtime was also a big issue. The union was fighting to limit the workweek to six days and no more than 56 hours.

Willie Evans and James White were among the Local 303L members who traveled up to Quincy, Illinois, for a May 18 strike solidarity action at Titan Tire's annual shareholders' meeting. They joined members of USWA Local 164 who have been on strike at Titan Tire's Des Moines, Iowa, plant since May 1, 1998. Also participating were three Uruguayan unionists from the Sindicato de FUNSA and Federacion del Caucho (rubber workers' union). Titan Tire owns a plant in Uruguay, and unionists there have been actively supporting the Natchez and Des Moines Titan strikers.

According to a recent article in *Solidarity News*, published by the Titan strikers, "The meeting was held in a police-state-like environment, at the request of Titan officials, according to news reports. More than 50 police officers from the City of Quincy, Adams County, and the State of Illinois occupied the grounds of the Quincy Holiday Inn, site of the meeting. The police cordoned off one-half a city block around the hotel and only allowed entry through a 'check point.'" The hotel was also occupied by cops, with more than 20 standing by in full riot gear. Police videotaped union members and took down license numbers of suspected strikers.

Despite this heavy-handed attempt at intimidation, strikers managed to get into the meeting and confront Titan CEO Taylor, hammering him with questions. Meanwhile, the board of directors fled out the back door.

That night, some 25 unionists held a candlelight vigil outside "Titan House," the official residence of Titan Tire. CEO Taylor previously owned the house, but sold it to Titan for \$850,000 profit, according to *Solidarity News*. The vigil, which included a reading of the names of the 1,000 USWA members who have been forced out of work by Titan over the past two years, was well-covered by the local media.

Strikers from Natchez and Des Moines will be in Detroit June 28-29 for solidarity actions. They plan to hook up with unionists there, including members of the unions who struck the *Detroit News and Free Press* in July 1995.

Susan LaMont is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 2122 in Fairfield, Alabama.

NY unionists rally against 'rat' employers

BY SAMANTHA KERN

NEWYORK—Several hundred unionists gathered in Union Square June 15 for a rally organized by the New York City Central Labor Council. They were accompanied by 11 giant inflatable rats, each bearing a sign with the name of a company in the city that is trying to bust a union or prevent one from being organized.

The rally was part of a national week of action sponsored by the AFL-CIO called "7 days in June." Union officials reported that 150 activities, including speakouts, rallies, and marches, were organized in 36 states to put heat on targeted companies.

The inflatable rats have become a common sight all over New York. From construction sites where bosses attempt to use nonunion workers, to the picket line at the Domino Sugar refinery, where members of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) have waged a year-long strike, to the Museum of Modern Art, where striking United Auto Workers members are fighting to defend their health-care benefits and wages, the rats have become a popular tool to bring attention and solidarity to different labor fights.

Workers came to the rally representing about 15 different struggles. Commenting on the labor action, Sam Malloy, a member of Teamsters Local 1205, said, "I loved it! Workers who are fighting see they're not the only ones." Malloy is one of the dozen workers fighting for a contract at Rode & Horn Lumber in Brooklyn. They have been locked out since October.

A contingent from ILA Local 1814, which is entering its 12th month on strike, stood in front of a rat wearing a Domino Sugar sign. The 300 workers there went on strike last June after Domino offered a contract aimed at weakening the union by removing the seniority system, several holidays, and all personal and sick days.

Héctor Figueroa, a member of Service Employees International Union Local 32B-32J, spoke to the crowd about two local struggles. "Cleaners are on strike against two rats: Golden Mark and Muss Development," Figueroa stated. "In the last five weeks, workers have been struggling for better wages, benefits, and the right to organize a union of their choice. *Si se puede!* (Yes we can)," he declared.

Building cleaners struck Muss after the bosses tried to intimidate workers by spying on them, and not allowing them to wear union buttons or pass out union literature. They also tried to force them to join a com-



Militant/Brian Williams

Hundreds of workers rallied in New York June 15 to support several ongoing labor struggles for union rights, health care benefits, and decent wages.

pany union. Among others who spoke was a worker at Time Warner Cablevision, who explained how that company has punished workers for unionizing, and a leader of the seven-week strike against the Museum of Modern Art, where the bosses told the strikers their union was "too militant for a museum" and they should accept cuts in health-care benefits.

The rally ended with a brief speech by

Hermenegido Macareno, a leader of a recent five-month strike against Adinah's Farms, a produce market in Manhattan. Macareno and the handful of other workers in the market successfully organized themselves into Local 169 of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees. "Now we have medical benefits and are paid for overtime and holidays. It was a victory for all of us," he stated.

New Zealand steel strikers fight for pay hike

BY BRENDAN GLEESON

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—More than 1,000 steelworkers went on strike June 14 at the Glenbrook Mill and Taharoa iron sand mining site, owned by BHP New Zealand Steel. The workers voted by an 83 percent majority to seek a wage increase of 7.5 percent on their base rate and 3.75 percent on allowances, as well as several other demands.

Glenbrook, which is located 36 miles south of Auckland, is a small integrated steel mill with annual production of about 650,000 tons of steel. Most workers at the plant are members of the Engineering Printing and Manufacturing Union (EPMU).

The company is offering a 5 percent wage increase in the base rate with no increase on allowances. This works out to an offer of about 3.8 percent on average, and is less in areas such as the iron plant where allowances for conditions make up a higher portion of wages.

"The strike has raised fears among employers that it is the beginning of a winter of discontent in the workplace," stated a front-page story in the June 15 *New Zealand Herald*.

At the union meeting, a worker reported that a senior manager had complained that the workforce was "aging and belligerent." The unionist added that "we can show the

company how belligerent we can be."

A younger worker received a warm response when stating that younger people had to be prepared to defend conditions won by previous generations.

"This year we understand Glenbrook was the most profitable field division in BHP and the offer [they] made was simply not enough," stated EPMU Auckland regional secretary Mike Sweeney. Last year the company earned an extra NZ\$6 million as the workers' wages were frozen (NZ\$1=US 46 cents).

Although not a direct issue in the strike, workers were concerned about the company's move to replace the Collective Employment Contract (CEC), which covers all unions on site, with a new Collective Agreement.

At first they wanted to include this in the current round of contract talks, but backed off. They are now hoping to negotiate this issue over the next year. BHP has indicated a desire as part of this new agreement to have the power to move workers around at will, hire casual labor and employ contractors as they see the need. Also included was a cap of 12 weeks pay on redundancy (lay-offs), a reduction in annual holidays by one week, salarization of hourly rates and elimination of overtime. Much of this is limited by the current CEC.

Brendan Gleeson is a member of the EPMU at Glenbrook and is on strike

Machinists win contract after one-week strike at Maytag

BY JACK WARD

HERRIN, Illinois—Workers returned to work June 20 after waging a week-long strike at the Maytag plant here. Some 1,200 members of International Association of Machinists Local 554 walked out June 12 after rejecting a contract proposal by a 2-1 margin.

Nobody crossed the picket line, and many truckers—union and nonunion—respected the line. The Maytag plant in Newton, Iowa, began to lay off workers as they ran out of parts produced at the struck plant.

Machinists approved a new contract 667

to 254, that includes a \$2.10 wage increase over five years. The previous contract offer granted \$1.20 over three years. The accord also freezes increases in workers' payments toward their medical coverage.

Jerry Nicks, an assembly line worker for 28 years, said, "This is the best contract I know of in all my time at the plant and the best wage increase I've seen. It's a lot better than the last contract."

A vocal minority opposed the contract, especially those paid on an "incentive work" plan where workers are paid based on the department meeting a daily production

quota. If workers do not meet the quota they can be docked up to 30 percent of their hourly pay. The company has a free hand to raise quotas when the production process is altered. Sterling Elders explained, "They cut my daily pay from \$140 to \$86 just by the company moving jobs around and putting different dies in the press."

Maytag, the country's third-largest manufacturer of large home appliances, doubled profits in the past three years on a 37 percent increase in sales. The plant, which produces washers and dryers, is the largest employer in this southern Illinois town.

Hotel workers on strike in Twin Cities say: 'Yes we can'

BY ROBERTA BLACK
AND FRANCISCO PEREZ

MINNEAPOLIS—"What do we want? Contract! When do we want it? Now!" shouted members of Local 17 of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union in front of the fancy Radisson South Hotel in the southern suburb of Bloomington.

Virtually all 400 workers of the Radisson walked out June 16. "¡Sí se puede!" (Yes we can!) was the chant of Spanish- and non-Spanish speakers alike.

Local 17 organizes housekeepers, bell staff workers, banquet services workers, bartenders, cooks, and waiters and waitresses, among others.

The Radisson is one of nine hotels in the Twin Cities area that has refused to give unionists the wage increases and benefits they are demanding.

"The owners don't want to give us a fair wage increase or adequate health care," said Melchor Salas, a Mexican-born convention services worker. "This is one of the most prestigious facilities for conventions and business meetings in the area," explained Salas as he waved at cars that honked in support of the strikers. "With the thousands of dollars they make on one well-attended convention of a few days during this busy season, they could cover all the wage increases and benefits we are asking for."

The following day, workers struck the Thunderbird Hotel, also in Bloomington.

The Minneapolis Hilton and the Crowne Plaza Northstar were struck on Monday, June 19. Workers at the Marquette hit the bricks the following day.

The other hotels involved in the contract negotiations are the Minneapolis Regal, Best Western-Normandy, Holiday Inn II, and Sheraton Airport Hotel. Local 17 officials said employees from the remaining hotels will be pulled out and picket lines will be set up within a week of the first walkout. Some 1,500 workers are covered by the contract with these nine hotels, affecting 3,161 rooms or 10 percent of the metropolitan area's accommodations. The contract expired May 1.

Hotel occupancy is particularly busy right now, and with a 50,000-delegate international meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous starting June 29, rooms have been booked within a 30-mile radius.

Multinational workforce

The picket lines reflect the composition of the working class in this city. Workers, ranging from teenagers to those near retirement, are mostly immigrants from Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America, as well as from Somalia, Bosnia, China, Laos, Vietnam, and other countries. There are also U.S.-born white, Black, Chicano, and Native American workers. "We need to organize translation into 17 languages," said Local 17 organizer Kate Shaughnessy.

Workers demand a 21 to 46 percent pay



Strikers who are Somali urge taxi driver not to cross their picket line at Hilton Hotel

raise over the next five years, with the largest increase for the lowest-paid workers, the housekeepers and banquet servers. Some have 25 years seniority at the Radisson but have not seen a wage increase. Starting pay is \$8.50 per hour. The company is offering a raise of 17.5 to 23 percent.

The company proposed an increase of 70 cents an hour in health-care benefits and retirement plans over five years, to \$1.73. But it lowered its wage offer by an equal amount. Workers refuse to accept this trade-off. Local 17 is also demanding paid English classes for workers who want them.

Tim, a waiter at the Thunderbird on the Bloomington strip, said, "The company is offering nothing, and trying to make up the difference by taking money from existing funds." Victor Salas, a banquet server at Thunderbird, stated, "With the cost of transportation and food, I need two jobs to survive, and to feed my family not just here but in Mexico."

David Muñiz, a waiter at the Radisson

since November, said, "We had been waiting for this day for a while. Waiters like ourselves can make good money, but the housekeepers and convention service workers make very little, and we could not let that go on."

"We bent over backwards to try to come to a fair agreement," said Uriel Pérez, a young organizer of Local 17 who was picketing the Radisson South. "The deadline came and went, and the membership of the union was upset. They came to the union hall and expressed their eagerness to strike."

When the negotiations broke down, "I came to the Radisson right away," Pérez recounted. "They had guards securing all the entrances but one, the employee entrance!" Pérez said, laughing. "We scattered throughout the building shouting, 'Strike!' People at the restaurant were startled a little by our entrance, but the workers were ready and waiting. The cooks calmly wiped off their tools, wrapped them up, and put them away in a drawer and told us: 'Okay, lets do it,' and we all marched out."

Workers at the Hilton Hotel in downtown Minneapolis struck June 19. Hilton bosses hired scabs and temporary workers from agencies, many of whom were kept in a banquet room until the morning the strike began.

Sabah, a housekeeper at the Hilton who is Somali, reported, "The company is telling the scabs not to change the sheets in the occupied rooms. Nobody is cooking and nobody is cleaning," she said.

John Rochester, a cocktail server, said, "Some guests might not see 850 unchanged sheets as a problem, but when it comes to 850 dirty toilets, that is when they will start coming out." Rochester makes \$5.50 an hour plus tips.

Victoriano Sibran, a banquet worker at the Thunderbird who was picketing June 18, has made \$8.75 an hour for three years and has not seen a wage increase. "I have my family to support," Sibran stated. "What we are doing is just and necessary."

Janitors in Washington demand union rights

BY JANICE LYNN

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Janitors at Catholic University are fighting for union recognition. They are among the lowest paid university janitors in this city, earning between \$7.75 and \$8.00 per hour to start. In addition, they have to pay between \$90 and \$200 per month for health insurance. Many are single mothers.

As part of its campaign of intimidation, the university went to court to try to stop a June 20 demonstration in support of the janitors' fight for a union.

However, a U.S. District judge denied the request for a restraining order and the rally proceeded.

More than 50 people showed up, including janitors and other Catholic University workers, union activists from the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), rep-

resentatives from other unions, as well as a number of Catholic University students.

"We're going to be here. We're not going to be intimidated!" said Mary Carroll in an interview. Carroll, who is Black, has worked seven years as a housekeeper at the university. "All we want is a union. People are working with no health insurance." Several of her Latino co-workers face daily harassment. "No one should have to go through scare tactics," she said.

Carroll explained that the majority of her co-workers signed petitions choosing to be represented by SEIU Local 82.

"The more they do this, the more the university will listen," said James Terrell, one of a number of power plant engineers who came to support the janitors. The Catholic University power plant workers are represented by SEIU Local 99 and will soon be

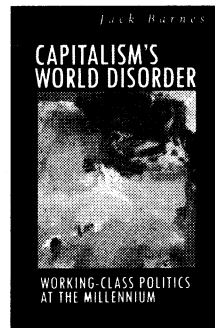
facing contract negotiations, according to Terrell.

"It's unfair the janitors don't get paid what they should. The supervisors are harassing them and there's nothing they can do," said Jennifer Wiezalis, a 19-year-old Catholic University student who was explaining why she and several other students turned out to support the union recognition fight.

Another fight by janitors in this area for union recognition is being waged by B&G janitorial workers who clean the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research.

When a delegation of mostly Latina workers decided to go to their boss to demand a union and better working conditions, all who participated in the delegation were fired. These workers and supporters have been organizing picketing in front of their workplace.

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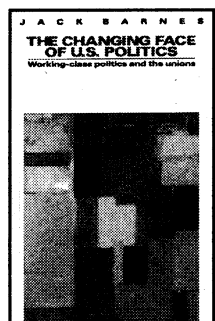


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The following solidarity message in English and Spanish was sent to meat packers at Dakota Premium Foods in St. Paul, Minnesota, from 13 workers at a nonunion knitting and sewing plant in Miami.

To the meat packers at Dakota Premium
S. St. Paul, MN
Dear Friends,

We just learned about your struggle for better working conditions and wages and for organizing a union. We salute you and send you our solidarity.

We are workers at a garment factory in the Miami area. We face many of the same problems you do. The big majority here make minimum wage, or barely above, even after working three, five, or more than ten years for this company. We have no health coverage, paid vacations, or any other kind of benefits. And we face abuses of health coverage, paid vacations, or any other kind of benefits. And we face abuses of our dignity by the boss almost every day. There is no union at this factory.

Your fight encourages us to do the same here. We wish you victory.

St. Paul meat packers to vote on union in July

Continued from the front page

Samuel Farley, a supporter of the union-organizing effort, also came under attack. A supervisor kept moving Farley rapidly from job to job. He was eventually called into the Human Resources department office and kept there for more than two hours.

The next day Farley delivered a letter to the company demanding an end to the discrimination against him because he is Black and because he is a supporter of the union organizing effort. The company official grilled Farley for more than two hours again that day and requested he sign a company document absolving the company from responsibility for his harassment. Farley refused to do this and reiterated his demand that the discrimination against him cease.

Workers María Sánchez and Blanca Hidalgo are both being backed by defenders of the union in their efforts to force the company to grant them compensation pay for injuries suffered in the plant.

'Workers Voice' comes out

These incidents of workers' resistance to company harassment have been detailed in the *Workers Voice*, an in-plant newsletter being produced by supporters of Local 789's union-organizing effort. The pro-union newsletter is prepared in both Spanish and English. The big majority of the workforce is Latino, especially from Mexico.

A recent issue has a variety of short articles that deal with the challenges and opportunities of organizing the union. The articles include news of the election date being set, an announcement of a July 22 union meeting for workers at Dakota Premium Foods, and fights by workers to hold off company attacks and receive compensation pay for injuries. The newsletter has a photograph of the June 12 demonstration of some 200 Dakota workers and their supporters outside the Dakota Premium Foods plant.

The front page contains a cartoon depicting Dakota Premium Foods manager Steve Cortinas talking to a lawyer, with workers on the boning lines in the background. The caption quotes Cortinas telling the lawyer, "We have to make them believe that they can solve their problems by coming to management. If necessary, we'll get rid of a supervisor or two, there is never a lack of brown-nosers. Once the workers vote against the union, we can go back to our old ways."

Workers interviewed by this reporter say the *Workers Voice* is well received. A number of workers, along with officials from Local 789, pitch in to decide what will be in the articles. These workers and others then distribute it in the plant.

Check out UFCW Local 789 web site

Supporters of the fight for a union by meat packers at Dakota Premium Foods in St. Paul, Minnesota, should check out the web site of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789, at www.ufcw789.org.

A color photo of the June 12 "Labor March For Union Recognition" greets visitors to the site. A link for more information leads to feature articles on the meat packers' fight from the June 13 *Pioneer Press* and the June 19 *Militant*.

The text below the photo says in bold letters, "The workers pictured above took to the streets of South St. Paul to demand recognition of their Union! The Labor and Religious communities turned out in mass to support the workers of Dakota Premium. On behalf of the workers and the staff and members of UFCW Local 789, thank you to all of those who turned out to support our fight for worker justice. If you want to join these union brothers and sisters and become active in your workplace and your community, or would like to receive more information about the UFCW and the organizing campaign at Dakota Premium Foods, contact your Union Representative or e-mail us at ufcw789@mtn.org."

The company has stepped up its efforts against the union. On June 21, management called a brief meeting and then began distributing its own bilingual flyer attacking the union. Claiming to be a fact sheet, the company sheet claimed, "A signed [authorization] card can be used by the Union to call you out on strike."

"If you've already signed an authorization card, you have the right to ask the Union to return it," the company flyer added. Workers responded by producing a third issue of the *Workers Voice* to rebut the company's claims.

Titled, "Company sows confusion," the latest *Workers Voice* explains, "A large majority of the workers signed cards asking for representation."

"The cards can't 'put you out on strike,' only you can do that through a vote," the pro-union newsletter adds.

"On July 21, you will decide what is right for you.... Without the union we workers will have no collective voice," the newsletter continues. "We have no voice on the speed of the line, working conditions, and being

forced to work while injured. Winning this union will give us that collective voice. For this reason, the company will stop at nothing to prevent and keep out the union, because it is not in the company's interests for us to have any control. Without the union the company is better able to sow divisions among us, pit us against each other and even buy some of us off."

Reaching out for support

Workers active in the union-organizing effort have been reaching out for support. On June 16, the first day of the hotel workers strike in the Twin Cities, several Dakota Premium workers visited the picket line at the Radisson South Hotel. They discussed the issues in both fights with 20 workers from the hotel who were picketing.

"You have the complete support of our union," they were told by Uriel Pérez, an organizer for Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union Local 17, the union that is striking hotels in the Twin Cities. Another HERE organizer, Kyle Makarios,

also voiced support.

The hotel workers union sent a contingent to participate in the June 12 rally of 200 organized by UFCW Local 789 outside the Dakota Foods plant.

The meat packers union march on June 12 received extensive coverage on local television, as well as articles in the St. Paul *Pioneer Press*, the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune* and the Spanish-language *La Prensa*, broadening the discussion about the union-organizing effort among workers in Twin Cities factories in subsequent days.

Local 789 is appealing for support for the workers at Dakota Premium Foods. Among other means of reaching out is the local's web site, at www.ufcw789.org (see box on this page). To send messages of support or obtain more information, you can write Local 789 at 266 Hardman Ave., South St. Paul, MN 55075, fax a message to 651-451-8227, or e-mail the union at ufcw789@mtn.org.

Tom Fisher is a textile worker in Minnesota.

Strike 'still going strong' at Domino Sugar

BY SARA LOBMAN

NEW YORK—"We've been out one year and we're still going strong. We're not going to give up. We prefer to see the company's doors close rather than go back in without a union," Carrie Ann Daniels said, summing up the attitude of many of the workers on strike at Domino Sugar's refinery here in Brooklyn.

Some 300 members of Local 1814 of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) walked out on June 15, 1999, after working without a contract for more than nine months.

Daniels, a member of the union committee, has worked for 20 years in the packaging department. She and other strikers were participating in a June 17 benefit concert and dinner at "The Ship's Mast," a bar just a few blocks from the plant. The event culminated a day of activity, including a morning rally in front of the refinery that included members of the Teamsters and Laborers unions.

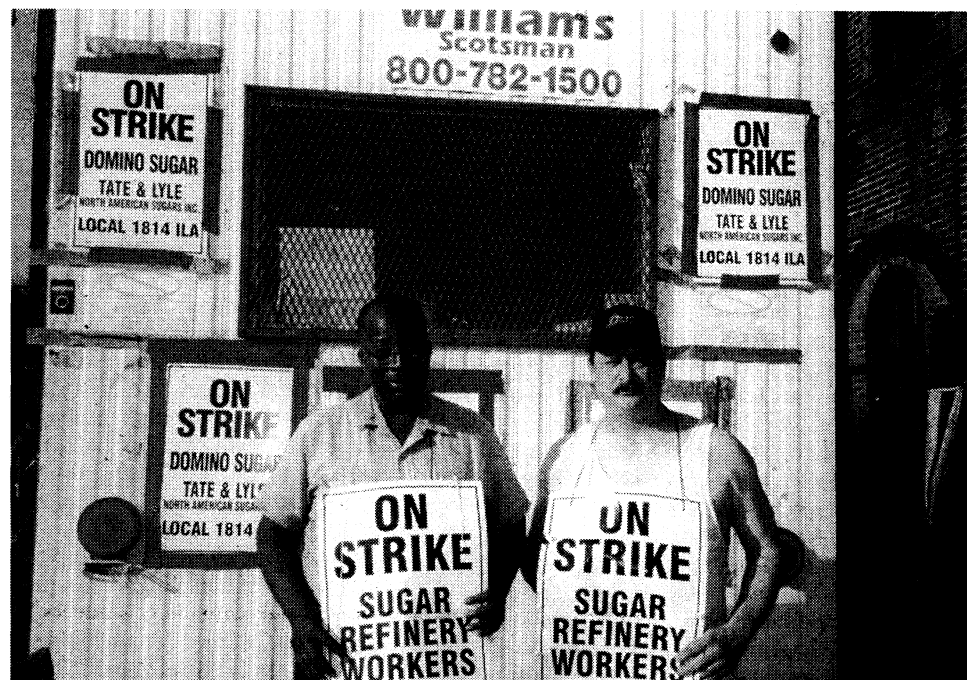
According to Charles Milan, a packaging mechanic and shop steward with 35 years in the plant, the issues in the strike are the company's demand to be able to contract out an unlimited amount of work, the removal of the seniority system, the elimination of three holidays and eight other paid days off, staggered workweeks with straight pay for weekend work, an end to guaranteed hours per year, the right to reopen the contract at will, and the reduction of the workforce by a third as a result of a decision to shut down the filter house where raw sugar was processed and to instead ship in liquid sugar syrup.

Domino Sugar is owned by the British company Tate & Lyle PLC, which has already shut down two Domino refineries in Boston and Philadelphia. Workers at the Baltimore plant signed a contract late last year and workers at the refinery in New Orleans signed a contract in February after a two-week strike. Workers at both plants are members of the United Food and Commercial Workers union. Tate & Lyle locked out 760 corn-processing workers at A.E. Staley in Decatur, Illinois, in 1993 during contract negotiations. Domino workers had participated in solidarity activities around that strike.

Workers at the Brooklyn refinery have been through two other strikes in recent years—one in 1989 that lasted three months and one in 1992-93 that lasted more than five months. The average seniority in the plant is 20 years, so most of the workers were part of at least one of these prior battles.

A big majority of workers who went on strike 12 months ago are continuing to press the fight. Unemployment insurance that most of the workers were receiving ran out earlier this year. Many are now working other jobs and do picket duty before and after work and on days off.

Strikers report that 58 workers have resigned from the union and crossed the picket line. In addition eight members of the boilermakers union, who had been honoring the strike, are now working.



Militant/Sara Lobman

Ron Bural and Gregory Trahey, on strike at Domino Sugar in New York, on the picket line June 10.

The first anniversary of the strike comes in the context of a series of protest actions by other workers in New York. "You would not believe how many people in this city are out on strike," Daniels said. "At first, when we walked out, we were just thinking about ourselves. But the only way the unions will become stronger is by supporting each other. We've been out to the picket lines at the Museum of Modern Art and at a lumber company here in Williamsburg. This morning we even went with a couple of Teamsters to visit workers on strike at a carwash not far from here."

Bookshop workers, librarians, assistant curators, and other museum workers at the Museum of Modern Art have been on strike for more than two months. A dozen members of Teamsters local 1205 have been picketing Rode & Horn Lumber since October 1999, when they were locked out by the bosses after rejecting a proposed 10 cent increase to their hourly wage.

In addition to the pickets organized by the striking ILA workers, members of several other unions regularly hold informational pickets outside the refinery, both as solidarity actions and to protest work Domino is contracting out to nonunion outfits. These include members of Teamsters local 282, several locals of the laborers, and members of Local 30 of the Boilermakers union.

According to Local 1814 vice-president Joe Crimi, the union is planning a June 22 protest against Tate & Lyle at the British embassy and plans to send a delegation to the Tate & Lyle stockholders meeting in London in July.

"The scabs crossing the picket line was definitely the biggest blow we've had," Janet Dunbar, a shipping department worker, noted. "The company wants us to think that we have to go back. It makes all kinds of offers. But we won't just surrender." Dunbar said the company offers \$100 to anyone crossing the picket line who gets another

union member to also do so.

"They used to try to play people against each other even before the strike," Daniels pointed out. "They'd organize these company picnics and dinners to try to convince us we were all family. But we're not a family. And with the time we've put in this place, we won't let them discard us like garbage."

"It's about dignity," Brian Walker, a product attendant who had worked 13 years in the refinery, noted. "We're not going to go back in without our heads held high."

The New York Central Labor Council has set up a fund to aid the strikers. Contributions can be sent to: C.L.R.C. Domino Strike Fund, ILA Local 1814, 70-20th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11232.

For further reading

The Struggle for a Proletarian Party

James P. Cannon

In this companion to Trotsky's *In Defense of Marxism*, Cannon and other leaders of the Socialist Workers Party defend the centrality of proletarianization within the political and organizational principles of Marxism in a polemic against a petty-bourgeois current in the party. The debate unfolded as Washington prepared to drag U.S. working people into the slaughter of World War II.

\$19.95

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

Death penalty debate spotlights injustice of judicial system

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The national debate swirling in the big business media over recent reports of "mal-functioning" in administering the death penalty has brought a sharp focus on state-sanctioned murder and the class injustice of the entire judicial system itself.

The exposure that these "flaws" and "errors"—in reality an exposure of the way the "justice" system really works—helped railroad thousands of working people to death row has created political problems for the U.S. rulers. They are seeking ways to stave off more blows to their prerogatives to use state-sanctioned murder.

The debate has been stoked by recent developments, such as protests around the scheduled execution of Gary Graham, the moratorium on the death penalty imposed by the governor of Illinois, the vote to ban capital punishment by the state legislature in New Hampshire, and a recent study stating that two-thirds of all convictions involving the death penalty are overturned on appeal because of misconduct by government authorities.

"Voices from across the political spectrum have begun to question whether those on death row received fair trials," wrote Brooke Masters in the June 12 *Washington Post*. "Although executions have reached record numbers, public support is at a 19-year low," Masters added.

"Can you honestly say that you're going to get equal justice under the law when, if you've got the money, you're going to get away with it?" declared New Hampshire state representative Anthony DiFrancia during a vote to ban capital punishment. "There are no millionaires on death row," he said. New Hampshire legislators passed a bill May 18 ending the death penalty, which was later vetoed by the state's Democratic governor, Jeanne Shaheen.

DiFrancia's comments reflect how the anti-working-class and racist character of the death penalty is becoming more exposed in the media. In the June 11 *New York Times*, an article headlined "Racial Bias Found in Six More Capital Cases," stated how Texas attorney general John Cornyn is seeking the overturn of the death row sentences of six inmates. Their death sentences were based on testimony from clinical psychologist Walter Quijano, who served as an "expert

witness" for prosecutors across Texas in sentencing hearings.

Cornyn's announcement came less than a week after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the death sentence of Victor Saldano, a native of Argentina. Quijano recommended the death penalty for Saldano to a Texas court based on his assertion that Latinos are prone to violence.

Abuse of death row inmates

A report released in mid-June, conducted by a team of lawyers and criminologists at Columbia University, stated that in all capital cases from 1973, when the death penalty was reinstated, until 1995 some 75 percent of the people whose death sentences were set aside on appeal were given lesser sentences and 7 percent were found not guilty. The study noted "flaws" in the judicial process such as prejudicial error, coerced misconduct by cops, suppression of evidence by prosecutors, coerced confessions, planting snitches in jails to spy on conversations between defendants and their lawyers, faulty instructions given to juries, and bad legal counsel.

Inmates awaiting execution are subject to abuse by prison guards. Last year Florida death row inmate Frank Valdez was beaten to death by prison guards armed with stun guns. Another Florida inmate, Bernie Demps, who was killed June 7 this year, said his executioners strapped him to a gurney for 33 minutes while they sliced into his body and struggled to find a vein to inject lethal chemicals. "They butchered me," Demps said in the death chamber before he died. "I was in a lot of pain. They cut me in the groin; they cut me in the leg. I was bleeding profusely."

The debate over capital punishment among bourgeois political figures has provoked a bipartisan push for legislative "safeguards" to ensure "fairness and accuracy" when the death penalty is meted out. "A significant number of people sentenced to death in America in the late 20th century have been absolutely, undeniably innocent," declared, Democratic Sen. Patrick Leahy, who is cosponsoring the Innocence Protection Act, along with three Republican senators. The measure would require state governments to make DNA testing available to all inmates, provide adequate counsel in capital cases, and preserve biological evidence that can be used in appeals after a person is convicted.

Moratorium on the death penalty

Gov. George Ryan of Illinois acknowledged the state's "shameful record of convicting innocent people and putting them on death row" when he declared a moratorium on executions there. Ryan, an advo-



Militant/Lea Sherman

June 15 demonstration outside Texas Republican convention against planned execution of Gary Graham. Protests against death penalty have highlighted anti-working-class and racist nature of death penalty and the entire judicial system.

cate of the death penalty, halted executions in the state after 13 men sent to death row were exonerated by new evidence. Since the death penalty was brought back to Illinois 12 inmates have been executed.

Ryan has appointed a commission to "fix" problems with the death penalty, but said he would not resume executions until the commission can give him "a 100 percent guarantee" against mistaken convictions. Some 12 states have already had legislation introduced to halt executions this year.

More than a third of the executions in the United States since capital punishment was reinstated have been in Texas. In Harris County alone, which includes the city of Houston, 62 people have been put to death, making it the jurisdiction with the third highest number of executions in the country. Only the state of Texas itself and Virginia have executed more human beings.

Liberal figures among ruling-class circles have harangued Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush for presiding over 134 executions—far more than any other state—during his five years as governor of Texas. For the first time in five years, Governor Bush granted a 30-day reprieve on June 1 for Ricky Nolen McGinn, so that DNA testing can be performed to determine more definitively McGinn's guilt on a rape charge.

The Associated Press reported that investigators from the *Chicago Tribune* found that since Bush became governor in 1995, defense attorneys presented only one witness or no evidence during the trials' sentencing phase for 40 of the 134 inmates executed. Defendants in about one-third of Texas's capital cases were represented at their trial or initial appeal by a lawyer who had been, or later was, disbarred, suspended, or otherwise sanctioned.

It was a multipart series in the *Chicago Times* exposing some of the most blatant abuses carried out by prosecutors, cops, and

the courts in capital cases that added to the pressures forcing Ryan to impose the moratorium on the death penalty. Some of the abuses included police torture to obtain confessions.

Vice president Albert Gore, Democratic candidate for president, reaffirmed his support for legalized murder in a June 13 interview with the *New York Times*. Gore had been mum about the death penalty controversy engulfing his rival, George W. Bush. His support for capital punishment was viewed as a political asset in 1992 when William Clinton chose him as his running mate.

That was the year when soon-to-be president William Clinton flew into Arkansas after campaigning in New Hampshire to oversee the execution of Ricky Ray Rector, a mentally disabled man. Clinton greased the skids for the execution process as he signed into law the reactionary Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act in 1996. One of the provisions in the measure puts a one-year time limit on appeals by death row inmates to federal courts after exhausting their appeals in state courts. Since state-sponsored killings were restarted, more than 70 percent of the 646 executions in the United States have been during the eight years of the Clinton administration.

The Supreme Court struck down all existing death penalty statutes in 1972, on the heels of the massive struggles of Blacks for civil rights and in the midst of the mass movement against the Vietnam War. Almost immediately state governments began passing death penalty laws to get around the court's reinterpretation of the Eighth Amendment, which bars "cruel and unusual punishment." On July 2, 1976, the Court declared that capital punishment does not violate the Constitution after all. The next year Gary Gilmore was put to death by a firing squad, dealing a setback to the long struggle to end this barbaric form of punishment.

for further reading

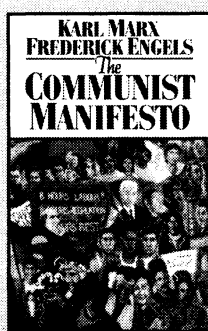
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Gov't moves to execute Gary Graham

Continued from front page

say the gunman was not Graham but a much shorter man. Their statements refute the testimony of the sole witness at the trial, Bernadine Skillern.

Hubbard told the *Houston Chronicle*, "He [Graham] is not the person I saw that night. They will be putting an innocent man to death."

Nevertheless, Ronald Mock, the original defense attorney, never brought these witnesses to testify at the trial nor did he cross-examine Skillern.

Three jurors have said that had this evidence been presented at the trial they would not have voted to convict. Bobby Pryor, one of the jurors, said he initially held out during deliberations, but was persuaded. "It was hard for me to do it but I had to go by what the judge instructed," Pryor said, "He just didn't get his justice in this trial."

Many working people here are discussing the case, which has been on the front pages of the *Houston Chronicle* and the TV every day all week. Donny Matthews, a garment worker here, commented, "I don't know if he is guilty or not. But if there are that many questions, why not give him an-

other trial?" Matthews said he is not for or against the death penalty, but noted that it is only used for some groups of people, "If you are rich you aren't going to be on death row," he remarked.

Graham "should at least have the opportunity to have the people who say they are witnesses be heard," said Mary Leblanc, another garment worker. "I don't believe in the death penalty." She added, "When I look at my children I think it could be them on death row. They could be there just for the way they look, in the wrong place at the wrong time."

Some workers accepted the government's argument that Graham had a fair trial and should be executed.

Protests demanding a reprieve and new trial took place all week, including three days outside the state Republican convention.

A spirited contingent marched in the Juneteenth parade through downtown with posters calling for stopping the execution. Posters were distributed to parade watchers, many of whom held them up as the contingent chanted "Free Gary Graham" and "No justice, No peace."

Some 150 people protested the announced execution and a couple dozen protesters were arrested June 19 at the governor's mansion in Austin.

On the same day, the pro-death penalty group Justice for All, a "victims' rights organization," called a news conference hailing the planned execution. Among their arguments for putting Graham to death were other crimes that Graham was accused of, although they had nothing to do with the case of Bobby Lambert's death.

That night on ABC's *Nightline* program, Texas attorney general John Cornyn insisted that Graham had a fair trial.

Governor Bush told the *Chronicle* that he would stand on principle and that, "the principle is the death penalty is administered justly and fairly to save lives. I believe that."

Even while Graham and his supporters were fighting to have the evidence be heard, three more people were executed, on June 12, 14, and 15. Under the Bush tenure alone 134 people have been put to death.

Lea Sherman is a meat packer in Houston. Jacquie Henderson, a garment worker, contributed to this article.

Cuban farmers discuss guaranteed markets, improving food supply

Reprinted below is an article that appeared in the May 28 issue of the Cuban English-language weekly *Granma Internacional* on the ninth congress of the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP), held in Havana May 15-17.

The article refers to members of a U.S. delegation that attended the congress. This group, sponsored by the Atlanta Network on Cuba, included seven farmers and two workers: Basu, an organic vegetable farmer from Illinois; Lee Dobbins and Willie Head, farmers from Georgia; Francis Goodman, Randall Jasper, and John Kinsman, dairy farmers from Wisconsin; Linda Joyce, an airline worker from Atlanta; Dexter Randall, a Vermont dairy farmer; and Maggie Trowe, a meat packer from Minnesota.

In an accompanying article in that issue of *Granma Internacional*, headlined "Erasing 40 years of lies," reporter Raisa Pages interviewed these visitors on conditions facing U.S. farmers and what they had learned in Cuba. The interview took place during a recess in the ANAP congress.

"U.S. land is being monopolized by large companies very quickly," said Randall Jasper, according to the *Granma Internacional* article, citing figures that show how small farmers in the United States have been driven off the land over the decades. Dexter Randall of Vermont stated that "many farmers have gone bankrupt because of the low prices imposed by the transnationals, and do not have medical insurance."

Willie Head explained the additional discrimination faced by farmers who are Black. He "pointed out that because of their color, they are left out of the agricultural market and are faced with a greater threat of losing their land."

John Kinsman stated that "in his country you can ignore the laws if you've got enough money in your pockets." Head added, "It is not democracy; the laws protect the rich."

Lee Dobbins noted that Washington acts similarly on the international level. He told *Granma Internacional*, "It's a national shame how the United States proclaims itself the most important country on the face of the Earth, but at the same time forces other nations to pay for its actions. Our capitalist system consists of politics of force and racist policies."

Maggie Trowe, a unionist and leader of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party, told *Granma Internacional* that not only farmers but workers face problems in the United States. "We demand free medical insurance for all workers," she said, "and participate in protests to demand our rights" that are under attack by the employers and their government.

Because of their experiences resisting this exploitation and oppression, the U.S. farmers expressed great interest in seeing Cuba for themselves and meeting Cuban small farmers who explained how, through their revolution, they have won the right to the land and are free from the scourge of debt, discrimination, and foreclosures. "They noted that it was very interesting to see how low-cost, organic family farming is promoted in Cuba, where the government guarantees the land, the market and other facilities," the article reports.

Dobbins and Basu "noted that cultural as well as economic exchange is needed with Cuba," arguing for eliminating barriers to communication and exchange between people in the United States and Cuba.

"They concluded by saying that they have a big job ahead of them to erase so many years of lies about Cuba in the United States, and then they went off quickly to continue their contacts with Cuban campesinos."

The *Militant* published an article on the ANAP congress in its May 29 issue. In the June 26 issue it also reported on a June 3 Militant Labor Forum in Chicago featuring participants in the U.S. delegation to the Havana meeting.

BY RAISA PAGES

While family farms are disappearing from the United States, due to bankruptcies in the

face of stiff pricing competition from the transnationals, the problems facing Cuban farmers are very different. They're encouraged to produce more, they're not dispossessed of their lands and they're guaranteed a secure place in the marketing of their products.

In these times of low world sugar prices, the Cuban government has doubled the price paid to farmers raising this vital export crop, in order to stimulate greater yields.



Militant/Maggie Trowe

Orlando Lugo Fonte, president of the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP), which held its 9th conference recently in Havana, emphasized to the 800 delegates from all around the country that the example of sugarcane is by no means unique.

The state has also increased the prices it pays farmers for pork, beef, honey, coffee, milk, and various vegetables, in order to increase production of these products, reduce the level of imports and improve the population's nutrition.

The demand for the materials used by the 63,000 farming cooperative members, the 150,000 small farmers, and the 25,000 who cultivate lands in usufruct is still exceeding the available supply. Some materials are purchased abroad and then sold to farmers in national currency. This policy means that they are not subject to the vagaries of the international markets.

Cooperative worker Juan Ibarra works in an association based at the foot of Turquino Peak in the Sierra Maestra mountains. His lands are at the highest altitude of any cultivated in Cuba. He told *Granma Internacional* that the machetes used to weed the coffee plants often don't arrive until they are almost completely overgrown by weeds. He added that many years have passed since his cooperative has received the wire needed to make animal compounds.

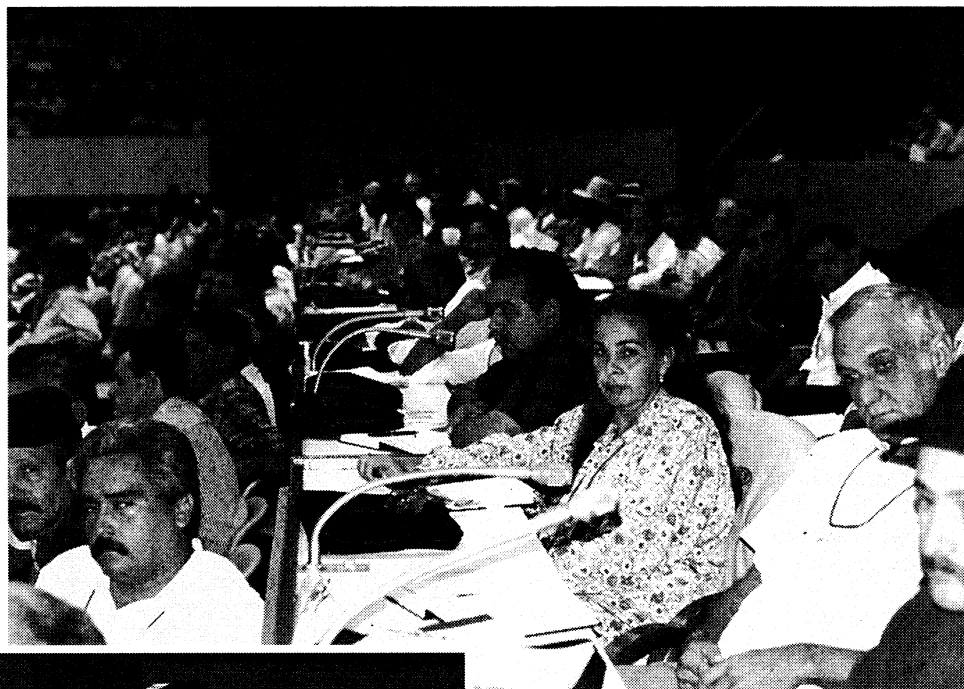
Ibarra, like many other farmers, is conscious of the fact that resources are scarce and that prices have risen on the international markets. He also knows that the [U.S.] blockade of the island interferes with the timely arrival of materials, but like others, he points out various deficiencies in the distribution of the little that is available.

Minister of Agriculture Alfredo Jordán pointed out that it's very difficult to make contracts for buying and selling one by one, with over 150,000 individual small farmers.

That situation will improve in the medium term, as many farmers have modernized their collective organizations by designating administrators to act on their behalf. In the case of credit and service cooperatives (CCS), the administrator represents them in their dealings with the state, without any fear that they will lose tenancy of their lands.¹

Lugo said that 1,248 of the 2,500 CCS organizations that exist in the country have already designated a company or administrator to negotiate the viability of production contracts with the state and also deal with banks and other institutions.

¹ In the Credit and Services Cooperatives (CCS), farmers retain individual title to their land, but pool applications for credit, share tractors and other equipment, and sell as a cooperative. CCS members are organized by ANAP.



Militant/Linda Joyce

Above, delegates at ninth congress of National Association of Small Farmers in Havana (ANAP). Left, U.S. delegation of farmers and workers with ANAP activists. Front center, María del Carmen Barroso, ANAP international relations staff member. First row, left to right: Francis Goodman, Willie Head, Dexter Randall, Linda Joyce. Back row, left to right: Basu, Randall Jasper, Lee Dobbins, John Kinsman, and Armando Rama, ANAP international relations director.

kets and farmers always have to meet these tax obligations as well as their production agreements with the government. There are also some local governments that don't allow farmers to sell their produce in the location they desire, as a result of legislation.

Carlos Lage, secretary of the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers, called for an examination of the subject aimed at identifying and eliminating all of these problems to ensure that there is maximum participation by farmers in this new type of sales.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, 2,800 minimarkets with fixed prices have so far been opened across the country. However, fewest advances have been made in the capital, since it's impossible to open more sales centers if sufficient produce doesn't remain after guaranteeing controlled distribution to the kitchens of schools, hospitals, nurseries, and work centers.

Manuel Millares, minister of finance and prices, said that in the first trimester of this year more than 36 million kilograms of produce had been sold in the farmers' markets with a declared value that has risen to 297 million pesos.

However, over the same period, over 133 million kilograms of produce had been sold in minimarkets at fixed prices, with a total value of 199 million pesos. A comparison between these two sets of figures demonstrates the lower level of prices that prevail in minimarkets. He said that taxes would be reviewed, since they should not be the same in the two forms of markets.

Sugar production levels set to increase

An analysis of sugar production levels showed that currently the average is very poor. The farming policy that applies to cane sugar cultivation was explained by Minister of the Sugar Industry Ulises Rosales del Toro. He said that intensive technology was now being applied to the harvest, which would both increase yields and gradually free up 250,000 hectares [617,500 acres] of land which can be used for other crops.

Cuban Vice president Raúl Castro recognized that deficiencies exist and called for an increase in production to satisfy both the needs of the population and of tourism.

The farmers asked to have their retirement age brought into line with other workers, since at the moment cooperative workers have to wait five years longer than other workers.

Raúl replied that the retirement ages must be equalized and said that this had been one of the problems that had caused some farming cooperative members to change careers and work in other sectors.

For all Cuban farmers, the free medical and education services brought by the Revolution have been a natural and logical part

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Perfecting distribution

Even though many Cubans complain about high prices in the farmers' markets, especially in the capital, the majority are in favor of continuing to allow them to operate freely alongside controlled distribution systems. The complaints stem from the fact that prices are maintained at a high level in relation to workers' incomes.

The farmers' markets, with their supply and demand culture, are administered by the Ministry of Domestic Trade. A new option, the so-called minimarkets, which have low fixed prices [*mercados topados*, or capped markets] and are the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture, has now been inaugurated in order to improve competitiveness.

The prices in the new minimarkets are fixed in each province or municipality of the country in agreement with the local administration, the Provincial Administrative Council of People's Power. The prices set take supply and demand into account and farmers and cooperatives are able to directly attend in order to sell their produce.

One problem, however, is that the tax liabilities are identical in both types of mar-

² In Cuba, retirement age for workers is currently 60 for men and 55 for women. Retirement age for farmers is 65 for men and 60 for women.

Korea talks show wide backing for reunification

Continued from front page

to try to pressure Pyongyang to make concessions on its national defense.

Despite Washington's official support for the talks, the 37,000 U.S. troops stationed in the south will remain. "Discussion of withdrawing American troops [is] premature," said U.S. officials cited in a *New York Times* report. "Any discussion of troop strengths or any number of other issues will have to be addressed as the process moves forward," said National Security Council spokesperson Lt. Col. David Stockwell on June 18. South Korean president Kim Dae Jung has said he supports a permanent U.S. military presence in the interests of "stability."

The Pentagon's 37,000 troops back the half-million-strong south Korean forces at the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), which divides the countries. The two armed forces hold large-scale military exercises every year, blatantly aimed at the north.

A heavy U.S. military presence in Korea has been a fact of life since the late 1940s. The peninsula was divided into Russian and U.S. zones of influence following the defeat of Japanese imperialism in World War II. From 1950 to 1953 Washington donned the United Nations colors and led an assault that involved troops from 15 nations. The U.S.-dominated forces hurled military destruction at the north—and backed a military dictatorship in the south—in its attempt to crush the revolutionary movement of workers and farmers, retake the whole territory, and threaten the Chinese revolution as well. Four million died as a result of Washington's war. The U.S. Air Force ran out of meaningful targets in the flattened north.

Fought to a standstill by the Korean fighters and Chinese volunteers, Washington signed an armistice dividing Korea at the 38th parallel. A peace treaty has never been signed, leaving the combatants still officially at war. As recently as 1996 U.S. president William Clinton rejected a proposal by Pyongyang for a separate peace treaty with Washington.

Seoul and Washington's policy of armed hostility and preparation for a war of aggression was summarized by the south Korean president in 1996. He said that "south-north Korean issues can be settled only through military strength."

Alongside the massive U.S. military backing for successive regimes in the south, U.S. capitalists have invested heavily in south Korea, which has become a major exporter of industrial products. A super-wealthy capitalist class has emerged over the years whose interests do not always exactly coincide with those of U.S. imperialism. Despite its relatively high level of economic development, however, south Korea remains a semicolonial country, under the domination of Washington.

In the north the government undertook a land reform and extensive nationalizations—measures backed by the workers and peasants, who wrested the country from imperialist control and drove forward the creation of a workers state.

Demands for reunification

North Korea's government has consistently called for an end to the division of the peninsula. In contrast, through several decades U.S.-backed military dictatorships in the south cracked down on any expressions of support for national reunification. The National Security Law—still used by police in south Korea—forbids any political activity favorable to the north or in support of reunification.

In recent years the growth of popular struggles for democratic rights, and of powerful unions in south Korea's car factories and other huge industrial plants, have emboldened many to support reunification more openly. By the late 1990s Koreans from both the north and south were confident enough to stage an annual march along Unification Road and attempt to meet, despite Seoul's prohibitions.

The summit meeting was widely publicized in Korea, and according to press reports was closely followed by millions in the south. Photographs, news stories, and television shows of the two leaders embracing and engaged in talks has undercut decades of propaganda demonizing the government in the north. Books about the north have reportedly become overnight best-sellers in the south.



Relatives of political prisoners, many of whom support reunification of Korea and government in the north, demand their release at February 1999 rally in Seoul.

The two-and-a-half-mile-wide DMZ between the two countries is split by a broad-based concrete wall standing between 16 and 26 feet high and 33 and 62 feet wide. It was built by Seoul in 1977 with Washington's backing. Running coast to coast for 150 miles, it is nearly six times the length of the now-demolished Berlin Wall. The DMZ marks the most explosive unresolved national division in the world today.

This is the context of the June summit, and the reason it generated so much interest among Korean working people. During the presidential summit students in the south reportedly celebrated the talks by hanging north Korean flags in defiance of Seoul's laws.

Signs of economic recovery in north

Seoul and Washington also had to adjust their political stance as reports testify that north Korea has survived the crisis and food shortages of the early 1990s. The north's "economy is believed to have grown slightly," according to the *New York Times*.

In the early 1990s north Korea's agricultural and industrial resources were hit by devastating floods and tidal coastal waves, and an energy shortage which caused periodic heating cutoffs. The country also suf-

fered from the impact of capitalist depression conditions in southeast Asia in the mid-1990s, and from an abrupt halt to oil imports after the breakup of the Soviet Union—a major trading partner—at the opening of the 1990s. Grain production fell by more than half through the early years of the decade.

In the face of food shortages Pyongyang appealed for international food aid. Washington seized on this as a means of pressuring the workers state, sabotaging, and with-

holding United Nations food relief.

Despite the enormous strains these calamities imposed on working people in the north, the imperialists' hope that the workers state would "implode" has faded. "There is no popular uprising against the Communist government in the North," wrote journalist David Sanger in a June 16 *New York Times* commentary. "They'll break even [in 1999]," said an unnamed U.S. official in January.

North Korea has made some progress on the world diplomatic stage in recent years as well. Diplomatic relations have been established with Rome, and discussions with the governments of Japan and Australia have been occurring.

On June 13, in an attempt to cool down tensions, Pyongyang switched off loudspeakers on its side of the DMZ. Three days later Seoul reciprocated. In line with the June 15 agreement, north Korea's Red Cross Society has contacted its southern counterpart to seek talks on reuniting families. Many families were split up by the division of the country in 1953.

A visit by U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright to China and south Korea was announced immediately following the summit's conclusion. Albright will "focus on Korean developments," said government officials.

In the June 16 *New York Times* David Sanger hinted at Washington's demands, and at the kind of carrots—complementing the stick of their armed forces—used by the U.S. rulers to try to entice concessions. "Is [Kim Jong Il] prepared to pull his troops back from the demilitarized zone?" he wrote. Alleging—without citing any facts—

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Why the Death Penalty Should Be Abolished. Speakers: Saraivy Orench-Reinat, member Boston Coalition for Mumia Abu-

Jamal; Linda Marcus, Socialist Workers Party and member of United Transportation Union. Fri., June 30, 7:30 p.m. 683 Codman Square, Washington St., Dorchester. Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 282-2254.

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Why Working People Should Oppose Australian Intervention in the Pacific. Speaker: Doug Cooper, Communist League and member Maritime Union of Australia. Fri., June 30, 7:00 p.m. 176 Redfern St. Redfern. Donation: \$4. Tel: (02) 9690 1533.

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We hear he's getting food stamps—With a slowdown of sales expansion, Michael Dell, chief honcho at Dell computers had his annual income chopped 85 percent—down from \$109 million to a piddling \$16.6 million. There was



Harry Ring

no mention of what's happening to the Dell employees.

Merciless murder—A May 21 article in the *New York Times* said the drug, Melarsoprol, used to treat the scourge of sleeping sickness, contains arsenic and kills 5 percent of those who take it. Sleeping sickness was pretty much wiped out in Africa 50 years ago, but is making a comeback. (Currently an estimated 300,000 cases). There was an alternative medication, the article said, but the manufacturer deemed it unprofitable.

Isn't it time for the revo?—Of the 1,233 new medicines patented over a 22 year period, the *Times* reports, 13—one percent—were for tropical diseases. Currently, no

major company is doing research on sleeping sickness.

Officials crack down on funeral thieves—Accused of ripping off customers for \$490,000, the Maine Funeral Directors Association agreed to pay a \$10,000 penalty and, as a news account put it, "to modify its program."

The part-way justice system—In Los Angeles, Edgar Escobar and Roberto Candido won reversal of a 1996 conviction for felonious gun possession. The conviction was based on the false testimony of two cops from the revelations-ridden Rampart division. It brings the re-

versal of Rampart frame-ups to 81 so far. Candido and Escobar were not freed, but turned over to *la migra* for deportation. The *L.A. Times* neglected to mention where or why.

Prejudiced against employers?—A survey shows that a majority of folks believe that people with lots of money are "greedy and insensitive."—News item.

Fine, people next?—"More airlines are taking steps to ensure safer transportation of pets at a time when the federal government is preparing a program to require monthly reports from air carriers on animal safety."—News item.

More bombings scheduled?—"14 world leaders meet to discuss ways to level global playing field"—News headline.

For this they need a manual?—The Sydney *Herald* reported the union bargaining strategy of the Australian government, as disclosed in a how-to government manual. The booklet suggests proposing phony demands to disorient the union, make negative comments even though this risks "causing antagonism," hurling threats and acting irrational. To offer such shopworn advice to irrational union-hating officials is truly a waste of taxpayers' money.

Crisis caused by capitalism, not gov't policies

The excerpt below is taken from "So Far from God, So Close to Orange County: The Deflationary Drag of Finance Capital," a talk presented at a regional socialist educational conference held in Los Angeles over the 1994-95 New Year's weekend. The entire talk appears in the pages of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*. The excerpt can be found on pages 126-130. Copyright © 1999 Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY JACK BARNES

Capitalism over the past couple of decades has at least doubled the official jobless rate that is considered "natural" in the United States, Europe, and most other imperialist countries. The numbers of workers no longer even counted as part of the labor force still continues to grow. At the same time, the capitalists have reduced unemployment benefits, held down the minimum wage, diminished the buying power of take-home pay, denied government funding for child care, and allowed welfare benefits to fall further and further behind price increases. Working people are being driven

out of affordable housing, and medical and retirement benefits are being cut. Under this pressure, sections of the bourgeoisie themselves began calling for reforms, fearing that the reproduction of the working class was being called into question. Marx and Engels describe this in detail in their writings.

Propagandists for the "market system" tell us such things cannot happen again in industrialized countries as we approach the twenty-first century. But the bitter truth turns out to be that it cannot *not* happen. In fact, it is happening *right now* in parts of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, including in the eastern half of Germany—birth rates are declining, and mortality rates are on the rise. And more and more workers sense it could also begin happening in the United States, Britain, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, and other imperialist countries, as depression conditions deepen.

The battle has opened up around all these questions in bourgeois politics in the United States. And it should come as no surprise that the right wing is firing the opening shots. The street battles will come later, after a fighting labor movement has begun to take shape and threaten capitalist rule. But the political initiative, to begin with, lies with the rightist and fascist forces that emerge out of the right wing of the bourgeois parties themselves, linking up over time with elements within the cops and officer corps of the armed forces.

Working-class currents, on the other hand, do not come out of the radicalization of a left wing of the bourgeois parties. They come out of a sharp and sustained rise in working-class struggles. And class battles on that scale will only begin later in the crisis; that is what the historical experience of our class has demonstrated. So it is the radical right that gets the first shot, and whose nuclei begin to grow earlier and faster.

That is why in the mass media today we already hear the voices of ultrarightists—a Patrick Buchanan, for example—but we do not hear communists.

That is why Yeltsin leans on a fascist like Vladimir Zhirinovsky as the crisis deepens in Russia, while there are still no substantial revolutionary workers organizations there (and why when Yeltsin is replaced, even if not by Zhirinovsky, it will not be by forces to the left of the current government).

That is why an openly fascist party can be given a cabinet portfolio in the government of Italy, a NATO country.² And it is also why that coalition can then receive the blessing of the president of the United States. On a visit to Rome in June 1994, Clinton said the Italian government "from top to bottom is unequivocally committed to democracy," adding that this remained so despite the fact that many parties "have their roots in a less democratic past."

1. In his early book *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*, Frederick Engels pointed out that in the industrial and port city of Liverpool in 1840, the average life expectancy of urban workers was fifteen years, compared to thirty-five years for the middle and upper classes. In Manchester, a major factory center, 57 percent of children from working-class families died before the age of five, versus 20 percent for the upper classes. Engels's firsthand observations of workers' wretched conditions during an extended stay in England as a young man—as well as his experiences there with the Chartist movement and other forms of working-class resistance—had an important political impact in making him a communist for the rest of



Auto workers rally against layoffs in Brazil, 1999. In a long-term deflationary period such as the current one, the bourgeoisie doesn't have to do anything for conditions such as increased unemployment to worsen. All they have to do is let capitalism operate.

his life. (For Engels's description of health and sanitary conditions in working-class areas, see especially the chapter entitled "Results.") Conditions improved in the wake of the capitalist expansion that began in the 1850s and the political results of the 1848-49 revolutions in Europe and stepped-up working-class organization and agitation in England. Nonetheless, nearly a quarter-century later, Marx wrote in volume 1 of *Capital* that "the consumption of labour-power by capital is so rapid that the worker has already more or less completely lived himself out when he is only half-way through his life.... Under these circumstances, the absolute increase of this section of the proletariat [those in large-scale industry] must take a form which swells their numbers, despite the rapid

wastage of their individual elements. Hence, rapid replacement of one generation of workers by another.... This social requirement is met by early marriages, which are a necessary consequence of the conditions in which workers in large-scale industry live, and by the premium that the exploitation of the workers' children sets on their production." (For Marx's discussion of these questions, see especially chapter 10 on "The Working Day," chapter 15 on "Machinery and Large-Scale Industry," and chapter 25 on "The General Law of Capitalist Accumulation.")

2. Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi formed a coalition government in May 1994, appointing leaders of the fascist Italian Social Movement to head five ministries. The government fell at the end of December 1994.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

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July 4, 1975

Joanne Little is a young Black woman who will go on trial July 14 for first-degree murder. The charge stems from the death of a white jailer, Clarence Alligood, who tried to rape Little, armed with an ice pick. As Little struggled to defend herself from the sexual assault, Alligood was fatally stabbed with the ice pick.

At the rally held in the Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, Little described her harrowing existence after she fled from the jail in Washington, North Carolina. She told of the visit by police with high-powered rifles to the home where she was hiding. "If the police had found me," she asked, "do you think I'd be alive today?"

She told of the \$500 bounty offered to her protector if he would reveal her whereabouts. If she had turned herself in to the police in Beaufort, County, she added, "you would have read, 'Joanne Little hangs herself in cell.'"

After eight days in hiding, Little turned herself in to the FBI with the help of the Southern Poverty Law Center.

When asked about the justice system in America, Little responded, "Justice is not the right word to use."

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
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July 3, 1950

Five years ago the United Nations came into being in San Francisco. It was hailed in Moscow and in Washington—and by the Stalinists the world over—as the "great instrument of peace," the "harbinger of world government."

Today, the same United Nations is nothing but the catapaw of U.S. imperialism, lending its prestige and a judicial cover to Truman's war in Korea. With hardly a moment's hesitation, the Security Council, save the vote of Yugoslavia, which demanded an independent investigation, accepted the U.S. resolution condemning North Korea as the aggressor. Its next move revealed even more clearly that the UN has no independent character of its own.

First Truman ordered that the air force and the navy proceed to Korea on a military mission. Then the American delegate applied to the UN for the adoption of collective sanctions. The method left no doubt as to who was issuing orders in the UN. The action of the Security Council over the opposition of Yugoslavia, in promptly endorsing the State Department's proposal confirmed the subservient status of the UN to the hilt.

Death penalty, a class weapon

Working people around the world need to loudly condemn the State of Texas moving to execute Gary Graham, who was railroaded to death row on a murder charge. As we go to press, the state government was moving full steam ahead with this state-sanctioned murder, adding to the mounting toll taken by the death penalty.

Graham's planned execution comes in the midst of heightened debate over the fact that, as with other trials and sentencing, workers who are on death row are likely there because of an outrageous violation of their rights. The big business class hopes to put a lid on the emerging scandal and growing evidence that a high percentage of inmates are unjustly convicted, put on death row, and shoved into the death chamber.

The proposed liberal reforms—making DNA tests available to inmates on death row and supplying competent defense attorneys—have nothing to do with fairness and ensuring legal rights for workers and farmers. The legislative "safeguards" are merely attempts to restore weakened confidence in their judicial system.

No worker caught up in the tentacles of the U.S. penal system finds justice. Any worker walking into a U.S. courtroom is automatically assumed guilty, more so if they are Black or Latino. The scales of justice are tipped against us. Workers sometimes win a measure of justice, but that is despite the legal system, not because of it.

Many liberals readily acknowledge "the shameful

record of convicting innocent people and putting them on death row." But the bottom line is the wealthy class has no intentions of relinquishing their prerogative to execute human beings. The number of yearly executions have tripled during the eight years of the Clinton administration. Clinton's signing into law the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act paved the way for an express train of more executions by placing time limits on the rights of death row inmates to appeal their convictions.

Under the Clinton tenure, the U.S. rulers have doubled the prison population, placed greater restrictions on parole rights, and strengthened the powers of the police. This steady erosion of democratic rights and increased authority to use repression is aimed at crippling the ability of the working class to organize and fight in its own interests. This is the real concern of the wealthy rulers. The death penalty is part of the arsenal of weapons used by the owners of capital to try to terrorize working people and deal blows to the rising resistance, confidence, and increased combativity among growing numbers in the United States. The stakes are high in the fight against the death penalty. Activists in the labor movement and all defenders of democratic rights need to make our voices heard against this barbaric practice.

Stop the execution of Gary Graham!
Release all inmates from death row!
Abolish the death penalty!

All U.S. troops out of Korea

The *Militant* wholeheartedly supports the demand of millions of Koreans from both north and south of the Demilitarized Zone to reunify their country and that the 37,000 U.S. troops stationed on the peninsula be sent home. Washington should immediately normalize relations with north Korea and end all aspects of its economic and trade restrictions imposed on the country as well.

Two days after the conclusions of the historic summit talks in Pyongyang, peasants, workers, and students protested against the U.S. military presence in the south, defying vicious assaults by riot police. The talks help demonstrate that Seoul and its imperialist overlords in Washington have been unable to either crush or ignore the popular demand for Korean unification.

The occupation of Korea by tens of thousands of heavily armed imperialist troops, backed up by nuclear weapons, is a violation of Korean sovereignty and the right of the Korean people to determine their own future. The U.S. rulers have neither forgotten nor forgiven the defeat they were dealt by the Korean people and workers and peasants from China, nor have they ever backed off their offensive stance. The Pyongyang government is right to warn of the "danger of war" the troops represent.

The U.S. military presence is also aimed at workers and peasants in the south. That's what Korean president Kim Dae Jung means when he says the troops help ensure "stability." Working people and students of town and country—with the labor movement often taking the lead—have become more confident and organized through a

succession of major struggles, even in the face of systematic repression. In recent years they forced an end to decades of military dictatorship, won union organization in wide sections of industry, and have kept the question of national unification on the agenda. South Korean president Kim Dae Jung retains his popular base in part because of his past role as an opponent of the dictatorship and his present stance in favor of talks.

The south Korean rulers can no longer justify the troops and their repressive laws by their former refrain of the "red menace." After the talks, which generated a swell of interest in north Korean society among working people in the south, they are less able than ever to demonize the Pyongyang government and the workers and peasants of the north.

Despite Washington's and Seoul's fervent hopes, and their use of food as a weapon, the north Korean government did not collapse under the impact of the severe crisis of the early 1990s.

These political shifts in Korea show how the U.S. imperialists did not emerge victorious from the Cold War, with greater political strength and authority. On the contrary—they are weakened and face sharpening conflicts and resistance around the world. The stakes in joining the fight of the Korean people to remove the imperialist forces and reunify their country are immense. Workers and farmers in the United States and around the world should identify with that fight, reach out to it in solidarity, and celebrate each step forward that is taken.

Defend social security for all

The bipartisan offensive against Social Security and the social wage is aimed at working people and takes many forms. U.S. president William Clinton carried through the first big assault on Social Security in 1996 with his legislation to "end welfare as we know it." The debate now taking place in the big-business press around the Social Security "reform" planks of the Gore and Bush campaigns is presented entirely outside the only possible framework for the working class: health care as a universal social right of the producing classes.

Amidst the struggles going on today, fighting workers can present the need for the labor movement to lead a social movement for government-funded lifetime health, disability, retirement, and dependent's coverage for all.

Democratic and Republican Party politicians do the opposite. They present Social Security as an individual retirement plan, rather than a social conquest of a class—the working class and its allies. That is why Albert Gore's hypocritical posturing in defense of workers and his proposal to open up individual pension accounts reinforces the government's assault, carried out to the furthest extent under the Clinton-Gore administration. Both the Democrats and Republicans are pushing plans to "invest" a portion of Social Security funds, to be done either by the government or by individuals. They raise the specter of Social Security insolvency and dangle the investment illusion as a way for all working people to have a secure future.

It is impossible to defend Social Security, as various liberals, spokespeople for the labor officialdom, and middle-class radicals attempt to do, by trying to refute arguments that an individual—especially those from the propertied or middle classes, but also better-off workers—

can do better with his or her retirement savings. Surely that can be true in many individual cases. But it has nothing to do with social security. Just the opposite.

All working people need to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with working and retired union mine workers in their fight to win government funding to defend the employer-financed cradle-to-grave health benefits the coal operators are steadily eroding. We should extend unstinting solidarity to the United Mine Workers' strikes against the Pittsburgh and Midway Coal Co., in which mine workers are defending health-care gains and setting an example in the process.

The miners' struggles help point out how "fringe" benefits that depend on the profits of the bosses in particular industries and companies do not meet the pressing social needs of the working class as a whole and our toiling allies. They are vulnerable to assaults or outright cancellation—even for those layers of workers who have won these benefits, as we've seen in one industry after another over the past decade.

Social Security, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, and a range of other entitlements were concessions granted by the ruling class in face of enormous battles by working people in the 1930s, and greatly reinforced by the struggle for Black rights and women's rights in the 1960s and '70s. These struggles cut across the ability of the super-wealthy minority to degrade the value of workers' lives and subvert class solidarity. Through the renewed struggles today, fighting workers can reject the framework of the Democrats and Republicans and chart a course to build a social movement to demand government-funded lifetime health, disability, retirement, and dependent's coverage for all be an unquestioned social right.

Korean talks

Continued from page 12

that north Korea's "major export consists of missiles and arms shipped to the Middle East," he asked if Pyongyang can "break off that arms trade, or satisfy the United States that it should be removed from the State Department's list of terrorist nations?"

"If its actions match its good words," wrote Sanger in typically supercilious style, "the desperately poor country will suddenly be eligible for a range of international goodies, including aid from the World Bank and the I.M.F."

After 50 years of blanket sanctions, Washington announced June 19 that it will draft new regulations to allow a variety of economic contacts between the U.S. and north Korea. "The action was a reward for North Korea's agreement not to test long-range missiles," according to a Reuters report. "Trade in most goods between the countries is now allowed," continued the dispatch, "as are direct personal and commercial financial transactions, investments, cargo shipments, and commercial flights. Exporting military goods and sensitive technology to North Korea remains banned."

State Department spokesperson Richard Boucher said that a U.S. Chamber of Commerce delegation may travel to north Korea soon, but "the actual opportunities for trade may be limited. Korea's reserves of iron ore, copper, zinc, and other minerals may attract interest, said analysts.

The south Korean industrial giant Samsung is reportedly considering investing \$1 billion in a consumer electronics plant in the north to "take advantage of the country's highly skilled, low-cost labor force," according to a *New York Times* report.

South Korean president Kim Dae Jung calls for Pyongyang to "follow the example of China and Vietnam. They have maintained their political systems, while gradually opening up economically," he said recently.

The statement describes the president's "sunshine policy" which also bows to the mass support for reunification. Kim Dae Jung—first elected in 1998—was himself sentenced to death nearly 20 years ago for speaking out against the military dictatorship. This and his lip service to unification help explain his popularity. On a visit to the United States in June 1998 he announced he would release political prisoners without requiring they sign letters in which they renounce their political beliefs.

Sheen off south Korean 'miracle'

Much is made of the disparities in modernization, industrialization, and productivity between the two territories. But the sharp depression suffered by the southern economy in the "Asian crisis" that began in 1998, and widespread layoffs that have hurled workers into the streets in a country without a social welfare system, have rubbed the sheen from the south Korean economic "miracle."

Ultrarightist politician and likely Reform Party presidential candidate Patrick Buchanan is one who claims that "South Korea has an economy twenty times that of North Korea, a population twice as large, a vast technological advantage, and access to U.S. weaponry two generations ahead of anything the North can produce or purchase."

Buchanan is a lone voice among U.S. capitalist politicians in calling for the withdrawal of "all U.S. armed forces from the Korean peninsula.... Seoul is fully capable of providing all the manpower and material for its own defense," he wrote in June following the talks.

Furthermore, he added, "The rise of anti-Americanism in the South tells us the U.S. occupation, begun more than half a century ago, should come to an end."

The ultrarightist figure was referring to the widespread opposition to the U.S. occupation forces. Two days after the talks ended, 1,000 people marched on the U.S. Air Force bombing range at the Koon-Ni Range in Maehyang-ri. "This is our land! Let's drive out U.S. troops!" they chanted, coupling the demand of the occupants of a nearby village gathered at Maehyang-ri to relocate the range with the demand for the withdrawal of U.S. troops in south Korea. Police assaulted 100 auto workers who tried to join the protest from the nearby Kia Motors plant.

The villagers have stepped up their protests since May when six people were injured and houses damaged by the impact of bombs dropped during bombing exercises. They explain that at least nine people have died in "accidents" linked to the range.

On June 18 the north Korean government reiterated its demand for the withdrawal of all U.S. forces from the Korean peninsula. "The United States imperialists pretend to be interested in peace," stated the Rodong Shinmun, the newspaper of the governing North Korean Workers Party, "but their actions only result in increasing the danger of war and escalating tensions."

Cuban farmers

Continued from Page 11

of life ever since 1959. But while that has happened in this small and poor island, U.S. farmers like Dexter Randall and Randall Jasper, of Vermont and Wisconsin, told *Granma International* that they had lost their medical insurance coverage in the same way as many others who have gone bankrupt lately in the United States.

When you hear the anecdotes at the farmers' conference from those who lived in Cuba during the time of capitalism, you realize that sometimes these huge social advances we enjoy have become so natural to us that we almost forget them.

Meeting celebrates life of John Martin

Continued from Page 6

tralia and Jack Barnes and Mary-Alice Waters on behalf of the SWP National Committee (see accompanying message).

Many speakers and messages highlighted John's self-discipline, reliability, and commitment. George Fyson and Pat Starkey, who were part of the Christchurch branch when John joined, wrote, "Typical of his seriousness, one of the first tasks he took upon himself was to sign up for some remedial reading classes, so he could adequately keep up with the magazines, books, and newspapers that he knew were necessary for his life as a communist."

Many also pointed to how John remained

these young workers, talking politics and showing them the *Militant*."

He didn't differentiate between them and workers his own age, Needham said. "John treated the new workers as equals and saw them as the future of the union."

Needham described some of the recent struggles waged by meat workers in the South Island. "After more than a decade in which the meat companies have wrested significant concessions from workers, the bosses are now less able to get their own way. There is a growing mood of confidence among workers."

Needham pointed out that John was delighted to be part of this new resistance, es-

Needham said.

John was not a union fighter alone, Needham stressed. "He realized the importance of workers not only resisting what was dished out to them by the bosses, but the necessity of building a movement to put an end to the capitalist system and all its brutality. It was necessary to build a communist party among workers to accomplish this task."

"Over the years, John was extremely successful in getting these ideas around among workmates. He sold a considerable number of *New Internationals*, *Militants*, *Pathfinder* books, and bulletins to workmates. He always knew how to follow up a discussion with a relevant piece of literature."

Needham recalled that John Martin was respected by his workmates. "They may not necessarily have agreed with all of what he said at times, but they respected him for the serious way he presented communist politics." A dozen co-workers attended a service in Christchurch for John that was held here the day after he died, and on the day of his funeral "the union at work stopped the chain and there was a minute's silence on the slaughterboard as a mark of respect."

Vermunt described John's recent activities as part of the Christchurch branch of the Communist League. He was diagnosed to go into hospital for an operation at the start of the international circulation campaign to win new readers to the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and *New International*.

This prevented him from going out on street sales. So, Vermunt said, "he offered to do more than his share of the bookshop roster in order that others could go out with the socialist press."

He did, however, sell a *Militant* subscription to one of the butchers at work, "which was a real boost to the branch's campaign to reach its target," Vermunt noted. "A tribute the branch paid to John was not only making our target in the circulation drive, but going over the top!"

Instability that marks capitalism

Tucker concluded the meeting by pointing to the instability that marks capitalism today. "We have our eyes on the working-class resistance that is emerging in response to this," he said. "This is why the Communist League is carrying out an effort to build union fractions and branches of the communist movement that are rooted in this resistance."

"Tomorrow there will be the first national meeting of communists working in clothing and textile, where we are building a new union fraction of the League. At the same time, we're organizing to get out to struggles wherever they occur."

Tucker invited everyone to join in the effort to build the international communist movement, adding, "That is the best way to pay tribute to John Martin and the example he set." In honor of John, the 19 people at the meeting donated more than \$NZ700 (US\$329) to the Books for Cuba Fund.

Janet Roth is a garment worker in Auckland, New Zealand.

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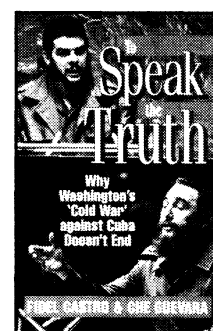
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Militant/Kathy Romanov

Engineers Union members picket South Auckland employer, May 1990. John Martin "never lost confidence that fellow workers would become fighters and communists, just as he had," said Mike Tucker, leader of Communist League in New Zealand.

footloose his whole life, ready to take on any assignment. "I was struck by how few material possessions he had," wrote Diane Rainey, today a volunteer in the Pathfinder Reprint Project, "and how little desire he had for material things and home comforts."

Eyes on new generations of fighters

Vermunt told the audience at the meeting how John always welcomed and kept his eyes on new generations of fighters beginning to take up the fight for Maori rights or get involved in union and social struggles. "John told me about some young guys who started on the chain at the meat works. He liked their energy and the way they figured out who the *us* and *them* are on the job pretty quickly. But they were getting themselves into a bit of strife with the bosses, so John gave them a bit of advice on how to be a fighter and keep your job."

Stuart Needham, a member of the Communist League, worked with John for the last five years at the PPCS Canterbury meat works at Belfast, near Christchurch.

When John got the job, Needham explained, "he was hired with a layer of very young workers, many of whom were in their teens, and for most of them the works was their first job. John spent a lot of time with

pecially when workers at the Lorneville works in Invercargill went on strike in December and January. "We set out to talk about this strike to as many workmates as possible. At that time there was little news about it. Here were 2,000 workers who had been out for six weeks and forced the company to backtrack on many of its demands, and most of our workmates knew little about it." Campaigning for solidarity with workers in struggle "was second nature to John,"

Socialists win ballot status in New Jersey

BY PRISCILLA SCHENK

NEWARK, New Jersey—Supporters of the Socialist Workers campaign in New Jersey celebrated a victory after their candidates for three federal offices were placed on the November ballot.

Running for U.S. Senate is Nancy Rosenstock; for Congress in Newark's 10th District is Maurice Williams; and for Congress in the 13th District, which includes Union City, is Kari Sachs. More than double the required signatures were submitted on nominating petitions.

Rosenstock, a sewing machine operator and member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees, thanked her supporters for the successful effort. "In 10 days we collected 2,300 signatures from working people and young people all over northern New Jersey," the socialist candidate said.

"Hundreds of people at the African-American Heritage Festival in downtown Newark signed petitions. And we received similar interest at shopping centers and street tables in Perth Amboy, Paterson, Irvington,

Jersey City, and East Orange. This shows the growing opportunities we have to bring into these elections a working-class alternative to the parties of the super-wealthy minority." Rosenstock is opposing Democratic candidate Jon Corzine and Republican Robert Franks.

Congressional candidate Kari Sachs is an auto assembly line worker and member of the United Auto Workers union. Williams is a staff writer for the *Militant*, which will have weekly coverage of the campaign activities of Socialist Workers candidates around the country.

Among those participating in their first petitioning effort was a worker fighting his firing from a local meatpacking plant and a longtime activist in the struggle to free Ireland from British domination.

Campaigning at Puerto Rican Parade

The candidates also joined members of the Young Socialists and other supporters for a day of campaigning on Sunday, June 11, at the Puerto Rican Day Parade, where they distributed hundreds of copies of a statement by the socialist candidates, demanding that the U.S. Navy get out of the island of Vieques. Rosenstock spoke in Newark June 16 on "Puerto Rico: why independence is in the interests of all working people."

Campaign supporters are now gearing up to collect 1,600 signatures in the next two weeks to place Socialist Workers candidates for U.S. president and vice president on New Jersey's ballot. They plan to step up petitioning and sales of the *Militant* at area plant gates, to dockworkers and truckers, to farm workers and small farmers in southern New Jersey, and to students as they return to campuses for summer classes.

U.S., British bombers inflict ongoing carnage in Iraq

BY SAMANTHA KERN

Without much publicity in the big-business media, the U.S. and British governments have continued to bomb, kill, and maim working people in Iraq, week-in and week-out, since the end of the 1990-91 Gulf War. In the past 18 months alone, attacks by U.S. and British warplanes have killed around 300 people and wounded 800.

In an article featured in the *Washington Post*, Lt. Gen. Yassin Jassem, spokesperson for Iraq's air defense command, said that of those killed more than 200 were civilians. The article described the fate of Omran Harbi Juwair, "caught in the wrong place at the wrong time." Juwair, 13, was watching over his family's flock of sheep when a missile landed 200 yards from the village of Toq al-Ghazalat, spewing shrapnel which killed him instantly. Many of the bombings are in rural areas, close to villages or grazing grounds shepherds use for raising sheep, with no signs of any military target present.

A recent UN survey confirmed Iraqi estimates that the number of those killed by

imperialist air assaults averages one civilian killed every other day.

Casualties occur not only from the direct impact of bombs, but also from air strike debris, like unexploded pieces of munitions spit out by bombs and missiles from U.S. aircraft. Unexploded bomb fragments left from air assaults near the village of Rihaniyah killed three youths and injured two others May 28.

Washington and its imperialist allies have imposed "no-fly zones" over 60 percent of the country. In 1991, a northern zone was established by the U.S. government, followed by a southern zone established in 1992. In 1996, the Clinton administration expanded the southern zone to the outskirts of Baghdad, the capital of Iraq.

The government in France has said it will freeze its participation in enforcing the "no-fly zones," given the rising number of civilians killed by the bombings.

U.S. imperialists try to justify the "no-fly zones," a blatant attack on Iraq's sovereignty, as necessary to defend the Iraqi

people. For example, Richard Boucher, a spokesman for the U.S. State Department, said, "Since the no-flight zones were established, they have succeeded in preventing the Iraqi regime from using air power to threaten citizens in the south and the north, as they have done in the past. The U.S. government also claims the Iraqi government has placed antiaircraft equipment near towns and villages to increase the possibility of civilian casualties during retaliatory strikes."

From bases in Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and from aircraft carriers, U.S. forces alone have carried out 280,000 sorties, the term used for each flight by a warplane, since 1991. The Clinton administration carried out an intensified bombing campaign in December 1998, after the Iraq government refused to permit U.S.-led "inspectors" to snoop around sites on the pretext of looking for "weapons of mass destruction." These provocative raids were imposed in 1991 after the Iraqi surrender to imperialist forces. A draconian economic embargo has been in place since 1990.

London targets rights of immigrants

BY PETE CLIFFORD

LONDON—The British government is using the deaths of 58 Chinese workers arriving in this country to push for tighter restrictions on the rights of immigrants.

Government officials and the capitalist media are waging this campaign in the name of cracking down on smugglers of immigrants.

The 58 workers, plus two who survived, had traveled in a refrigerated lorry (truck) on a ferry from Zeebrugge, Belgium. They are believed to have died from suffocation or dehydration.

The truck's doors had been locked from the outside, the refrigeration unit was switched off, and the outside temperature was 91 degrees that day.

The surviving workers were taken to a hospital, where authorities intend to interrogate them once they are conscious. The driver of the truck, a Dutch citizen, was arrested.

Media reports have focused on the traffickers who organize the transportation of immigrants to this country. Home Secretary Jack Straw declared before Parliament June 19, "The incident was a terrible human tragedy that must serve as a warning to others who might be tempted to place their fate in the hands of traffickers." He added, "The government is determined to continue to crack down on the evil trade in such trafficking, whose perpetrators have no regard for human life."

The target of the British cops, courts, and capitalist politicians, however, has been immigrant workers. And the government crackdown is driving many to resort to increasingly dangerous ways of entering the country.

Refugees denied social security

In November 1999 a new Asylum and Immigration Act was adopted. In announcing this legislation, Straw declared, "We need a system which reduces the incentive to economic migration and which recognizes that what the genuine asylum seeker needs is food and shelter, not a giro cheque." Asylum seekers are now barred from receiving social security payments, and can only receive vouchers for use in supermarkets and £10 (\$15) cash a week. At the same time, they are prohibited from working while seeking asylum.

In March this year Straw announced a crackdown on immigrants who are caught begging. People seeking asylum who are arrested and convicted for this activity will be put on a fast track to be deported.

In the lead-up to the London mayoral and city council elections in May, both Conservative and Labour Party leaders sought to outbid each other on the draconian steps they proposed to take against immigrants. Straw suggested that in the future, all visitors from the Indian subcontinent should put up a bond of £10,000 (\$15,000) during their stay.

Conservative leader William Hague proposed that all asylum seekers be housed in the misnamed "reception centers"—converted military and hospital sites, such as

one already established in Oakington, where new immigrants are to be detained.

Then, on June 16 Straw announced new proposals that would stipulate that people apply for political asylum from the country they were fleeing.

The latest deaths of immigrant workers has highlighted the debate in ruling circles over immigration policy. The various arguments raised all share the British capitalists' framework of using immigrants as a source of superexploited labor and their efforts to pit working people against each other. That is the purpose of the restrictions on immigration and other measures.

The *Times* of London, for example, stated in an editorial that tighter controls on immigration "should not be the only response." It argued that "all the controls that can be devised cannot block this flow entirely," and commented favorably on U.S. and Canadian measures that, while policing workers, "have highly effective visa programmes to attract skilled manpower."

Likewise, the right-wing *Daily Telegraph* ran an editorial hailing the fact that "people want to work, even for such derisory sums," referring to the second-class wages and living conditions imposed on immigrant workers.

Meanwhile, thousands were expected to march through London June 24 to protest the asylum laws. The demonstration has been widely publicized. Mobilizing meetings have been held in many cities.

Pete Clifford is a member of the Transport and General Workers' Union.



Militant/Tim Rigby

March in London against restrictions on immigration and asylum rights, 1996. British rulers are using deaths of 58 Asian workers to press drive against immigrants' rights.

Putin visit to Berlin shows frictions with U.S. rulers

BY CARL-ERIK ISACSSON

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—German chancellor Gerhard Schröder and French president Jacques Chirac insisted that their alliance within the European Union remained solid during the Franco-German summit June 9 in the German city of Mainz. They confirmed that they would work together on producing a satellite reconnaissance system open to other governments in Europe. This project was launched a few years ago amidst firm opposition from Washington, which had offered Bonn use of its own satellite system without restrictions and at a fraction of the cost to develop a new system. The German government declined the offer.

Paris and Berlin also agreed to order 125 new Airbus A400M military transport aircraft, currently being developed by Airbus.

The U.S.-led wars against Iraq and Yugoslavia revealed how dependent the imperialist powers in Europe are on Washington's military intelligence and transport capability.

These moves by Paris and Berlin are aimed at reducing this reliance on Washington's military might, and include plans to develop a European wing of the NATO alliance with a 60,000-strong rapid deployment force.

Both heads of state also criticized

Washington's plans to move ahead with developing an antimissile shield. Schröder said these plans risk triggering an armaments race.

At the end of the summit, Chirac said at a press conference in Mainz that the French government has the "same opinion about the terrible consequences of a missile defense shield."

There were few details presented at the meeting on the question of changing the European Union (EU) institutions to make way for its supposed enlargement into eastern and central Europe, such as the redistribution of national votes in the Council of Ministers. The government of Germany, now the largest EU country with its reunification in 1990, has pressed for more voting power, a move not yet endorsed by Paris. In fact, the enlargement of the European Union is put more and more into the future.

NATO's expansion closer to the borders of Russia is now the real project pushed by the Clinton administration. The imperialist powers in Europe—in rivalry with each other and with Washington—are maneuvering around the expansion of NATO. Berlin and Paris try to slow it and promote their own interests.

Putin pays three-day visit to Berlin

During his visit to Berlin in mid-June, Russian president Vladimir Putin praised as "constructive and sensible" the German regime's position on Washington's plans for a defense shield, according to an interview published in *Welt am Sonntag*. Putin also expressed Moscow's concerns "at the attempt to put NATO at the center of the formation of a European security system." He later warned that attempts by NATO to admit the Baltic states into the military alliance would make a "country like Russia feel threatened" and "could destabilize the situation in the whole of Europe and the whole world."

Germany is more exposed than any other country in Europe to political instability to its east, and not the least in Russia. More than 60 percent of Russia's foreign debt of \$150 billion is to German banks. Among the questions that were at the center of Putin's state visit were pressing for some

debt relief and for new investments by German capitalists in Russia. "Germany is Russia's leading partner in Europe and the world," Putin said June 16.

Putin also used his visit to Germany and other European countries to counter Washington's drive to set up an antimissile system. His meetings in Germany led to agreements on German investments in Russia worth \$1.7 billion, and cautious German backing for a Russian plan to involve itself in the defense of Europe against missile attacks. The Russian president proposed a "theater" antimissile system it has under development, allowed under the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, in opposition to Washington's plan, which violates the 1972 accords.

Washington's plans, Putin said, would be a "big strategic error that will only increase strategic threats to the United States and Russia, as well as other states." The Russian president added, "We have come to the conclusion that the missile threat from the so-called rogue states of the Middle East or the Asia region that is referred to by the United States does not exist in reality and is not going to emerge in the visible future."

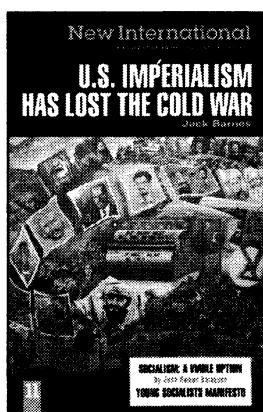
Schröder said Putin's proposal for a missile defense system from the Atlantic to the Urals "deserves thorough consideration and should be discussed both in the NATO-Russia Council and through bilateral relations." The German chancellor added, "We agree on the necessity of political measures with regard to arms control in order to preserve the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty."

Berlin's opposition to debt relief for Russia remains unchanged. The *International Herald Tribune* quoted a German official saying, "We have told them we are not going to treat them like Angola. Russia is a potentially rich country." Differences over the debt were not allowed to cloud the meeting. Chancellor Schröder and his wife have accepted an invitation to spend Christmas in the Kremlin.

The outcome of the meeting is certain to cause concern among Berlin's imperialist allies, among them Paris and Washington.

Carl-Erik Isacson is a member of the metal workers union in Södertälje, Sweden.

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